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Safe Decisions

Interview by Michael Luis

When you go out to shows and party with your friends, are you making safe decisions? These Vic-city punkers hope so. Safe Decisions is a four-piece Victoria punk band whose sound harkens back to a simpler time of cheap beer, long days at the skate park, and fast riffs. Their sound is sharp, hard-hitting, and easy to get wild to. Singing about partying and politics with equal measure, bassist/vocalist Nick Brandle, drummer Jesse Lessard, vocalist Kaz Nagano, and guitarist Zack Nips have rendered Safe Decisions a new local favourite.

Absolute Underground chatted with Nips to learn a bit more about the upstart group.

Absolute Underground: When did Safe Decisions start? What brought you together?

Zack Nips: About two years ago. We all grew up listening to punk rock, and while Brandle and I played in [Victoria ska band] SweetLeaf together, I was always trying to push him to play punk rock with me. He's an amazing writer. But he always replied, "Only if Lessard moves here and drums for us." So after a year or so of me pestering Brandle, Lessard just happened to move to the island. I learned their old Brash Tax [band Lessard and Brandle had in Edmonton] songs and we started

jamming and writing new material. Kaz came into the picture about six months ago and he's been killing it. We wanted to be writing more new material than we were. Kaz was at every show, and because of that he already knew most of the lyrics, so we asked him to come jam with us and here we are.

AU: There are so many different styles of punk, but you guys rep "skate punk" and "melodic hardcore" pretty hard. What drew you to that style?

ZN: I think our influences are pretty similar. The bands we listened to growing up would be considered "skate punk," bands like Pennywise, Bad Religion, Strung Out, NOFX, et cetera. You can definitely hear influences from all those bands in our music. I love technical metal. I wish I could play it, so I try and write tricky riffs. While some riffs can sound a little on the metal side, I think Lessard's drumming keeps it in the vein of punk. Brandle definitely would have something to say about it if my riffs got any heavier [laughs]. What keeps drawing me to this style of music is the energy it gives you. When I hear a really amazing punk song, I get goosebumps, all amped up, and pretty much want to mosh right away!

AU: What are your thoughts on the Victoria music scene?

ZN: The Victoria music scene is great. The ska and reggae community is huge in Victoria and brings tons of international talent to the Island, the metal scene here

produces some really killer bands that should be touring the world, and the punk scene seems to be moving towards the punk rock we grew up listening to, so my three favourite styles of music are killing it! Another awesome thing is how tight-knit and supportive the community is of each other. You have hip-hop artists supporting the reggae scene and vice versa, local punk bands opening for a legendary ska band. It's a great scene.

AU: What are some other Victoria bands people should be checking out?

ZN: Vic City Rejects are doing a really cool thing with punk rock right now and Aidan [Engel]'s other band, Whiskey and Fire, is definitely worth seeing. Although Fableway isn't a new band, I hear they are going to start playing more often so keep an eye out for them. They have really dope songs. Apex Breaks are a group of insanely talented musicians. Nick Lesage is just a beast on the bass. I can't take my eyes off his lines when I watch them play and they are doing something really cool and original.

AU: What does a typical Safe Decisions show look like?

ZN: A typical Safe Decisions show, eh? I hope my mom doesn't read *Absolute Underground*. Beers

have been known to happen. Pre, during, and post-show. Brandle and I usually insult each other pretty harshly on stage and Brandle usually has a



VICTORIAS LOCALS ONLY

funny story or two to tell, most times coming at the expense of one of the other band members. We all have a unique friendship. If you didn't know us you might think we hated each other. Anyway, we definitely encourage people to party and get rowdy with us, participate in the classic "woah oh" sing-along parts. You can see the spectacle that is Brandle, the precise drumming of Lessard, and Kaz is usually jumping around getting into the music and getting the crowd worked up. You can also see me hack my way through a solo.

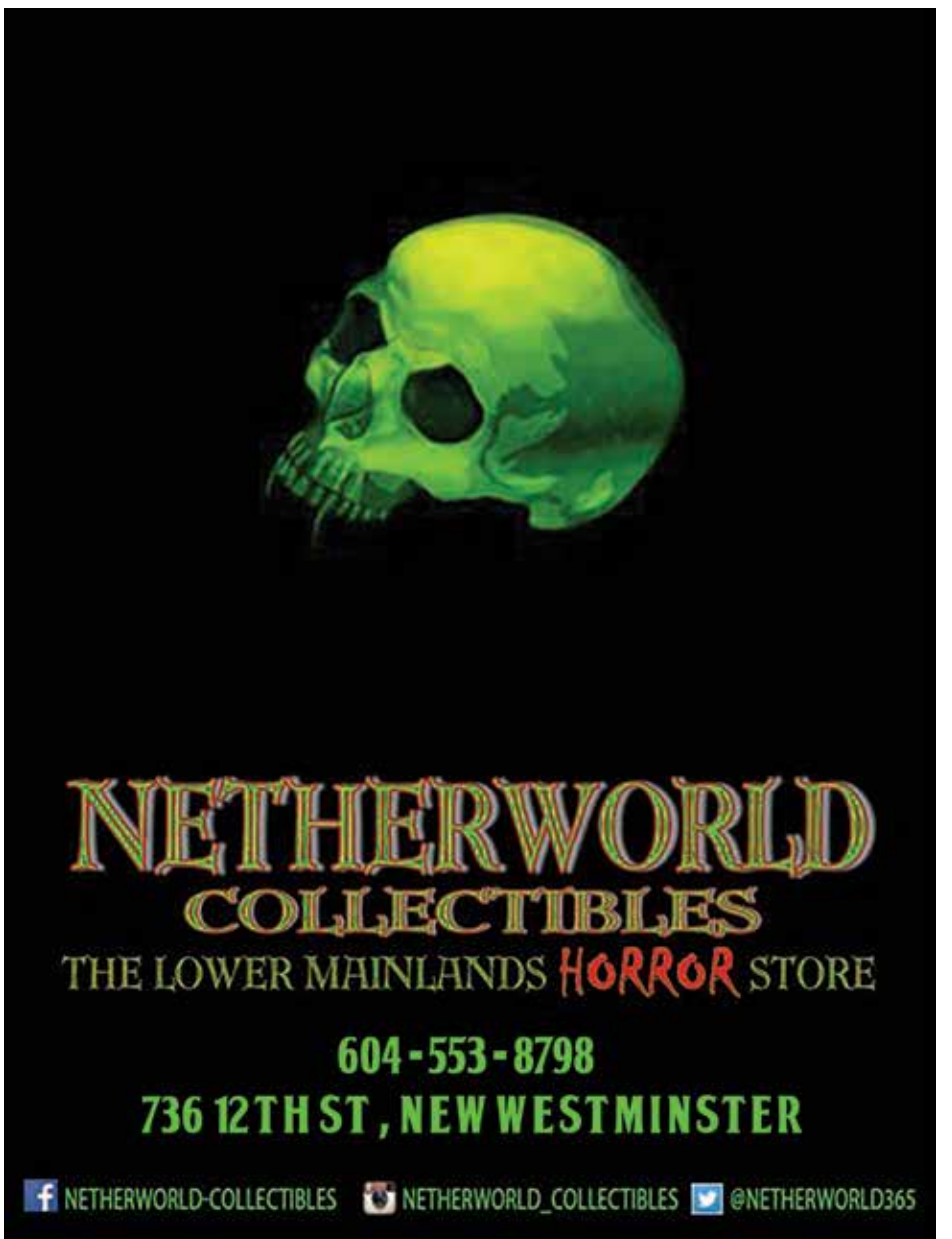
AU: What does Safe Decisions have planned for touring or recording?

ZN: We are working with Ben Wittrock of Razorvoice. He is recording, mixing and mastering our album. Working with him has been an absolute breeze. We aren't going to release the album like albums have been released historically. We are going to release something new once or twice a month and after about a year of that we will release the album with all those songs, including some unheard ones, of course. We have not toured yet. I don't think any of us are organized enough to put a tour together. We are planning on doing some towns on the island in the coming months and we've got something currently unannounced in Vancouver in November. We are very grateful for our progress and the other bands that have helped us get to the point of being ready for a tour.

AU: Any other final comments for our readers?

ZN: Support local music. The amount of talent in this city, no matter what genre, is really incredible. I know a lot of local musicians here who are talented enough to be touring the world. We are pretty lucky to have this much talent in our little city, so get out there and support!

Find out more about Safe Decisions at Facebook.com/makesafedecisions. You can follow Michael on Twitter at @MichaelACLuis



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Waingro

Interview by Roger The Shrubber

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking with and what are you most infamous for?

Brian Sepanzyk: Brian, and I do vocals and play guitar. I once got in an argument with Patrick Swayze on a film set and called him the C-word. He then later called me back to apologize. It was a strange night.

AU: Give us a brief history of Waingro, who are you and how did you form?

BS: Benjie (drums) and I were looking to start a more heavy rock band and started jamming on some riffs I had. Benjie knew Nate from before, and then we all became best friends.

AU: Tell us about your new album, III! What can we expect to hear on it?

BS: We're stoked on this one! I think people can expect a well-balanced album that is satisfying to listen to front to back. We really keep that in mind when we put the albums together, to make sure and have varying levels that songs hit on so that it's not all one thing in your face the whole time. So hopefully that comes across!

AU: All the reviews are mentioning a grungier, more punk rock aesthetic in describing this new album - I can definitely hear the Converge influence you've mentioned previously.

Can you tell us a little bit more about this musical evolution and slight departure from the straight stoner rock of Mt. Hood?

BS: Rad! It's hard not to have some of the boys' influence seep into the music. *Mt Hood*, we took more stoner and classic rock influences to play with and fleshed out those ideas and made that our more rock album. So with this one, it was fun to take other genres we liked and see how that sounded. It took longer than the first two, which we put out a year from each other back to back, but it was fun to take some extra time and explore the songs fully. I think it's more of having a band that can cover a lot of genres since we listen to a lot of different stuff personally.

AU: Does the new album explore any particular themes or stories?

BS: Yeah, as with the other two, I write the lyrics from point of view of the character Waingro, who is from the movie *Heat*. As a jumping-off point to start at least, and then come up with hypothetical situations pre-movie. I find it an interesting approach when tasked with lyric writing, which can be tough and this helps keep it fun. It's a cool way of storytelling and helps to create the mood of the songs as well as the visuals that will accompany the music. Like situations that include him trying to start a cult and approaching it like a gang war with other rival cults.

AU: This album is being released on Sludgelord Records, is this a recent development? Have you signed with the label for upcoming releases? How has the experience been, working with a label?

BS: Yes! Super excited to be working with them as well as No List here in Canada! They've both been amazing to work with and we feel like we've hit the lottery. Aaron with Sludgelord has an energy that is almost inhuman - his passion for music and promoting is incredible. The guy has a full-time job, a family and still finds time to all the Sludgelord posts and has started a label. And Lee from No List is this amazing guy who works to put out cool bands from Canada that otherwise would maybe not get a chance, so he's become somewhat of a national hero in the

underground music scene. Couldn't be happier!

AU: Do you have any tours or festivals booked in support of the new album? Where and when can we see you play next?

BS: We have our release show on September 13th with some great pals/bands: Hashteroid, Idle Rites and Total Isolation, who all rip. It's going to be a really fun and loud evening. Other than that we're working on getting our Visas so we can hit the States, which we're beyond excited for! That's going to be our main goal after the album comes out.

AU: Do you have any music videos, recordings, anything else in the works we can look forward to?

BS: Absolutely! We're going to try and get some more bonus material going so we can stay in the hearts and minds of people's limited attention spans.

AU: Can you tell us about the video "Go for the Gro"... what exactly is happening here, because it's amazing, and can that beer be a real thing, please?

BS: Haha - we're hoping someone local can help us out and do a limited run! Or maybe we go bigger? Coors, Pabst - if you're reading, let's talk. My brother and I are a huge fan of those old 80s beer commercials, and one night while we were passing some of our favourites back and forth, I realized I was looking at a great approach for a promo vid. Or at the very least, a really fun day with our pals. So I got my best friends together who are hilarious, got a bunch of beers and shot at my friend Nick's family farm. It was an incredibly fun day. Then it was really weird feeling to take this beautiful footage we shot and run it through the VCR about 30 times to make it feel and look shitty and then digitize it again. It was great!

AU: Brian, what are you doing in film these

VANCOUVER VENGEANCE

days? What's happening with "Compulsion" after its initial (very successful) round of film festivals? Any more horror movies in the works?

BS: Yeah, we had an amazing time getting that into film festivals and traveling around with "Compulsion." You never know how it's going to be received and to have the legs that it's had has been beyond our expectations so we feel very fortunate for that. I've fleshed it out into a full feature film script and hoping to get it in front of someone who has the means to make it! In the meantime, Nick Yacyshyn and I have a couple of scripts that we're working on that are in the horror space, but have one that we're going to go ahead with soon. So now it's just trying to get a budget together and physically prepare for the exhaustion it takes to make an independent film. Stoked!

AU: What's next for Waingro as a band? What are your long term goals?

BS: We're just having a lot of fun playing music together, so we kind of just take it as it comes. We've already done more than we thought we would have with the band so anything more is a bonus for us. Our goal is to play more cities and meet up with other rad bands! I mean, if we could go on the road with GOAT that would be pretty rad too...

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already?

BS: It's all out there. All of it.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

BS: If you're still reading this article about us - thanks!

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Bret "The Hitman" Hart

by Andrew Roberts

"The Excellence of Execution", "The Hitman", "The Best There Is, The Best There Was, The Best There Ever Will Be". Just a few of the nicknames Bret Hart has earned over his lifetime in the professional wrestling industry. One could say he's a valid choice for the Mount Rushmore of wrestling. A five-time WWF World Champion, two-time WCW World Heavyweight Champion, multiple time Intercontinental, United States and Tag Team Champion.

Bret has been involved in so many amazing matches over the years. His legendary battles with "The Heartbreak Kid" Shawn Michaels, "Stone Cold" Steve Austin, The Undertaker, Mr. Perfect and many others. His family feud with his brother Owen Hart was many years long and featured many Match of the Year candidates.

Most recently being inducted into the WWE Hall of Fame for a second time (inducted in 2006, and then again in 2019 with his late brother-in-law and tag team partner Jim "The Anvil" Neidhart. Bret appeared back in May at the upstart wrestling promotion 'All Elite Wrestling' Double Or Nothing pay-per-view showing off the promotions brand new World Heavyweight Championship. Bret was just in Toronto at WWE's

SummerSlam 2019 pay-per-view to wish Seth Rollins luck in his WWE Title clash with Brock Lesnar.

One of the most famous Canadians in history, Bret Hart has even ventured into the world of animated television appearing in an episode of "The Simpsons", a recurring role on "Lonesome Dove", and will be starring in horror movie "Tales From The Dead Zone" with Corey Feldman coming out in 2020. According to the release the film, "is about a Medical Examiner conducting autopsies on victims of a horrible car crash, who imagines how they may have lived their lives. The anthology links four terrifying stories together." You can find out more about the movie and watch the trailer at talesfromthedeadzone.com



Bret Hart will be LIVE and in person in BC this September with two shows in Vancouver at the Rio Theatre. Thursday September 12th is almost sold out. There are a few tickets remaining in the balcony, and the balcony allows for all-ages to attend. A second show has been added on Sunday September 15th which still has tickets and also Meet & Greet packages available where you can get two autographs and a photo with Bret! Tickets

CALGARY CARNAGE

there will also be a Q&A portion of the night, so make sure to think of a great question to ask! There will be a merchandise table with items of the Hitman you can purchase for him to sign, along with other wrestling memorabilia for sale



available for the Sunday show at showpass.com. The Sunday show is 19+ only. Friday September 13th Bret will be at The Port Theatre in Nanaimo BC, Tickets and Meet & Greet packages available at porttheatre.com, and Saturday September 14th he'll be at The Tidemark Theatre in Campbell River. Tickets and Meet & Greet packages available at tidemarktheatre.com. Both those shows are all-ages welcome.

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Andrew Roberts is a life-long wrestling fan. Through his company 'Got Pop? Concerts', he has promoted concerts, comedy shows and other events. Working with bands like Big Wreck, Mother Mother, The Trews, Matthew Good, Carly Rae Jepsen and many others. Comedians such as Bob Saget, Charlie Murphy, Steve-O, Pauly Shore & Jon Lajoie. Also Andrew has brought WWE Hall of Fame Legends Mick Foley & Jake "The Snake" Roberts to Vancouver Island for their one-man shows. Andrew was once voted most likely to never grow up.



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Return Of The Leech

Interview by AU Editorial

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking with and what are you most infamous for?

Johnny Bandura: We are Return of the Leech and I am Johnny (Broken String) Bandura.

AU: Give us a brief history of the band, how did you form and what are you all about?

JB: Well we all came out of the Northwest Territories where, for the most part, we grew up and have been friends ever since. Other people don't like us. We have a common interest in early punk rock and old pop music.

AU: Tell us about your music - what can we expect to experience when we see you live?

JB: Well, we play power chords and sing poorly. We like instrumental surf rock kind stuff, as well as old horror comics, so yeah.

AU: When and where can we see you play next?

JB: We just finished playing a few shows in the Edmonton area, so now we're just waiting to hear about a date on another show in the States (We'll keep ya posted).

AU: You guys recently went back in the studio - how was that?

JB: It was painful.

AU: When can we expect new music from you?

JB: We should be releasing our full length album sometime this fall

AU: I see you have one gig this month in Edmonton - any plans to tour the rest of

SHR-EDMONTON

Canada anytime soon?

JB: No plans to tour and our one show turned into three shows, no plans to tour as of right now, but there's talk of a Vancouver and Toronto show.

AU: What's the punk scene like in Edmonton right now?

JB: I guess it's different from when I first started playing here, it seems like there are fewer "punk" venues and all ages punk shows don't seem to be



as popular as when I was growing up. Could just be me though, I don't get out that much.

AU: What does the future hold for Return of the Leech?

Well we're hoping to make a YouTube video that goes viral and we can go on Ellen. Maybe win a Grammy. Something like that

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already?

JB: At some point in time we are going to actually practice and put on a good/mediocre performance.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

JB: Taco times crisp beef burritos are pretty good.

facebook.com/returnoftheleech/

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subculture

By Wendythirteen

Waste. Inferior products. A first-world, garbage-based society. The obsession to shellac the world with gentrifying particle board. All of the above?

I had a run in this week with a broken refrigerator. It made me acutely aware of my contribution to food waste and a tendency to hoard food, even though my children had flown the coop years ago. I had to get tough with myself and admit there was shit in my icebox that was expired and I would never eat, ever. Solo eating and living is tough when desired portion size is geared to purchasing family sizes to avoid becoming cost prohibitive and feeling ripped off value wise. That's how I end up with a 4L pail of off brand ice cream because the frugal shopper in me won't fund a dinky toy size version of name brand imitation 'frozen dessert'.

I suppose being raised by thrifty parents that were brought up off the cusp of the Great Depression has something to do with my

mindset. The good part about that upbringing is my obvious anti-trendy lack of consumerism. I love duct tape and fixing old things before ever considering replacing them. I wear clothing with rips and paint splotches. I duct tape my vest together when it rips and utilize giant, strategic kilt pins for pocket security. I tried to get the old fridge fixed. Nope. Garbage. Obsolete. My carbon footprint just rolled over in its grave.

I'm really sick of plastic, so I've been trying to slowly replace stuff with glass, wood, clay and metal. It's fucking impossible not to be a hypocrite given the excess state of plastic packaging in everyday modern life. Guilty, from my ciggie's wrapper, yogurt containers and even the fact that I like straws in my drinks.

Besides the shit I shipped from the flatlands when I moved to Vancouver in 1991, most of my furnishings were alley shopped. The amount of shit people toss away in this city is atrocious. I have calmed down on that habit, given the high probability of the great bed bug, cockroach and other assorted vermin Vancity takeover. The Cobes was also glued together by volunteers, with duct tape, flat black paint and slathered in posters as wallpaper. D.I.Y. Forever!

I just watched a video of Gibson Guitars running over hundreds of brand new guitars. Unbelievable example of waste. I've always thought Kurt Cobain was a wasteful idiot for smashing his musical gear when there are so many people that can't afford instruments at a time when music programs and classes in schools are being erased.

I'm kind of glad vinyl has made a comeback, but alas the compact disc has become almost useless courtesy of digitization. I sure wish I had brought my old school, heavy as fuck vinyl with me from the flatlands, but noooooo brought other household crap instead.

Waste, destroy, replace? Repeat. That was the second refrigerator I've had to buy. Fourteen years was the lifespan of the last one. They don't make shit like they used to. My parents had their still working appliances long after they became obsolete. Capitalist consumer society. The same bullshit that dates computers, software and phones to costly auto upgrades with every new model has now affected household amenities once thought to last a lifetime. We make shit to break down sooner so you have no choice but to just buy more. Fuck the planet. The capitalist slogan.

Interestingly enough, speaking of obsolete, I just read an article on the Granville Strip D.J. dance clubs waning in popularity. We can look forward to more construction waste as they strip out the old particle board clean lines for some new retro looking, slathered lipstick on a pig. They are

going for the 'barcade' trend. Can't wait to drink a fifteen dollar cocktail, fill the game slots with toonies, while I reminisce my youth of the late 70s and early 80s when I lived in an arcade. Don't worry bland people. The Roxy will survive.

Maybe there is hope for the 'hanging on for dear life', live music venues with this news. Or in Vancouver centric, perhaps it is just the misery of, "Hey guys, no one has disposable income anymore," the current chorus of lamentations of the overburdened working poor who haven't fled and fight to survive in this gaudy, overvalued housing market. Gawd forbid that the corporate carbon copy chachi bar overlords lose any income that has already sucked the life out of the city's underground subculture by the hostile takeovers of our old haunts.

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Demons And Wizards

Panel discussion with vocalist Hansi Kürsch and guitarist Jon Schaffer

Transcribed by AU Editorial

Q: What made you get back together and re-release your first two albums?

Hansi Kürsch: We never split, we just took a little break, that's all it was. We were discussing the third Demons and Wizards album for at least ten years, we never found the time because of the simple fact that Iced Earth and Blind Guardian are quite successful and touring all the time, and whenever we found a spot, it turned out that there was no spot at all, because one or the other band had another obligation. The other reason is, it didn't seem to be so long. We really only started talking about this album five years ago. We started songwriting maybe two or three years ago, and then another break happened again, and that brings us to 2018 when we said we'd meet to go back and do some work for Demons and Wizards. For some reason at that time all the promoters were bombarding us with requests for concerts, for shows to play, so we said yes, we're good for shows and we'll do the album, and that's where we're at. Obviously since our contract with SPV has been terminated in 2015, there was a need to re-release the albums, and this was the best spot we could imagine, because it's quite a decent run for us, having the re-releases, doing these festivals and then coming up with a spectacular new album.

Q: The reaction to you guys putting out an album and touring again has been very swift and intense. Has that made you rethink the frequency with which you release albums? Maybe the idea of touring more than once every 20 years?

Jon Schaffer: The frequency of records, yes, we are committed to making that more of a priority. There's no doubt about that. At least in the foreseeable future we're going to have two studio albums and a live album. As far as touring goes, it's going to be a question of special event kind of stuff, festivals and special events, because Demons and Wizards is a special thing, a thing that goes back to our bond, which is we met each other in 1990, we toured together, both bands in 1991, we became like brothers back then, that has never changed, and we have visited each other through the years and it was like eight years after we met each other that we found out we could actually write songs together, so that brought our relationship to another level... we've wanted to do this for years, but it's always about scheduling conflicts. Both bands are very busy, we're the leaders of both bands, we make shit happen, we work a lot of hours that don't have anything to do with being in the studio, or being on tour, it's a lot of hours of office work as well, so that makes it difficult for the schedules to lineup. We committed last year, we're going to make this

DEMONS & WIZARDS

happen, I think you can expect another studio album within a few years, a live album in late 2020, maybe 2021. There's some magic flying and we know that, the press has always reminded us of that through the years.

Q: How is your experience at Hellfest?

HK: This turned out to be such a fantastic festival over the years, I've played here with Blind Guardian, either the first or second [festival], it was quite an adventure and now it's maybe the most established festival in Europe.

JS: For me, it's amazing. Hellfest is amazing. From a fan perspective it's gotta be one of the coolest things to do. Iced Earth played in 2008 the first time, and then we played last year, on the day that Maiden played and Stu and I were up in the VIP area watching the whole thing and I was like, "This is fucking awesome." There are a lot of great festivals in Europe especially but there's a special vibe about this one, it's grown so awesome and the lineups are awesome every year.

HK: There's good taste in the mixture of bands, and the setup itself... it's really well designed, and the people are so dedicated, not only the [staff] but also the fans. You can really feel that.

JS: The backstage is better than it was last year, so it's a step by step process. Really cold showers, kinda sucks, but at least there's a few toilets backstage!

Q: So your live lineup is basically Iced Guardian... Will this lineup also be performing with you on the future album?

JS: What Demons and Wizards is, it's Hansi and I, we work with very talented people regardless of what happens on the albums or live... there's always going to be really talented musicians in that, and on this new album that we're recording right now, there will be five different engineers working on it because we're working in different parts of the world, so you don't have to worry about the quality of the players, there may be some guys that are on the stage right now that will play on a future record, Jake from Iced Earth played a couple solos, but there's other people too. Brent from Iced Earth played the drums on the record, but he's not doing the tour, Frederick's doing the tour, and Marcus, who's been a brother as long as this guy, rhythm guitar in Blind Guardian, he's playing bass in Demons and Wizards. We don't know, we don't really concern ourselves with that because whoever we work with is going to be talented, committed and part of our family. There's always going to be our people involved in that, that's what it's always going to be.

Q: What will the new album sound like, is there a huge evolution in sound?

HK: There will be a huge evolution in sound, that happens naturally by 20 years in between

albums... there were so many development. I would be surprised if there was no evolution. Having, as Jon mentioned, five engineers will really make a difference... the process hasn't changed. We exchanged ideas... that's the good thing about songwriting, you always try your best, you don't want to do second best, it doesn't matter who you're working with and when you're working on it, it's always to deliver the best. I have to say, by what we have accomplished so far, the songs are finished composing, I just have to do some singing... I think we have eleven songs



and I personally would say they are all top-notch. They define what Demons and Wizards is, for sure, but you can also figure that there are 15 years between this year and the last one. We have changed as people, we have become different characters.

JS: This cycle was difference because at the end of the album cycle I went out to the mountains in Arizona and hiked for a month, and spent one week with my bandmates, because we were going on hiatus so the five of us went out to the desert and stayed together, and then I stayed three weeks by myself and got an enormous amount of power from that, and energy from just staying away from the music business, not talking to management... I talked to Hansi about twice. And other than that, I was completely disconnected from everybody, so when I got back to songwriting, it was like Boom! Everything went really fast and I knew it was really strong material. It's good, the arrangements came and I started sending Hansi stuff and then I knew from an instrumental standpoint that this is some of the best material I've ever written, and when he added his stuff on top, it was like, okay. We have something really special for the people. At the end of the day, I actually don't care if you guys love it, because I do, and he does. And that sounds harsh, but it's art. It's honest, it's real, it's actually some of the best material I've written in my entire life, from my standpoint, and what he's done, it's killer. People are going to be pleasantly shocked by what's coming.

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Sabaton

Panel discussion transcribed by AU Editorial

Sabaton: This bunch of people behind us is the Great War Choir, and it's going to be a really special show. A lot of bands play with orchestras, which we've done too, and it's a lot of fun, on the

other hand, that's something different. Choirs is a lot of Sabaton, so we thought why not take something that's a big part of our music and make it even more strong. So, give it up for the Great War Choir!

We're about to release our new album, *The Great War*, it's a concept album about World War One, and we have already been around a lot, talking about it, meeting a lot of people all across the world to present the new album, and we can

honestly feel very warm at the response of the people who've heard it so far. We were able to bring the album here, to France, to present it for the first time in Verdun, a couple of weeks ago, it was an absolutely amazing experience, to be able to showcase an album in a location where it actually happened. That's something we always wanted to do.

Q: Can you tell us more about the music video clip for "Bismarck"?

S: The first video clip we released is for a song that is not on the album, the song "Bismarck." The Bismarck was a story we wanted to do a long time ago, because we get a lot of emails from fans around the world, asking us, "Can you write a song about this, or that," and we keep all of that... and now we're coming up to our 20th anniversary as a band this year, and we thought, some people said to us, "You need to go on tour, playing only classic Sabaton songs from the first album." We said no, the 20th anniversary of Sabaton doesn't look back, it looks forward. It looks to the future of the band. On the other hand, we thought we should give something as a thank you to the fans... we thought, what can we give to everybody around the world? Well, hopefully Sabaton music. So, we recorded one song, and we chose as the topic [almost] the most requested Sabaton theme - we didn't choose the most, because the most was Star Wars, so we chose the second-most wanted topic, and then we are cooperating with a gaming company who do games like World of Tanks, and World of Warships, and they were able, when they heard the idea that we were going to do a song about Bismarck, well it was featured in one of their games, so they said, "We'd love to help produce a great video clip for you." And they really did it, it was an exciting story to create and film, and the amount of feedback for it was absolutely amazing. That was the story about Bismarck. And when it comes to "Fields of Verdun," we chose this one as the single for the new album. We knew it was one of those stories that will definitely stick out from the album, it's a very important thing. When we were sitting and discussing what the topics were going to be, World War One is a huge topic, and there are so many different things inside, but we knew that the Battle of Verdun has to be in there. And we thought, we're also going to present the album in



Verdun, so let's make a music video about it.

Q: Will there be anything in the new album that will be shocking or surprising to us as fans, or is it going to be an instantly recognizable classic?

S: It is very much a Sabaton album. However, on every Sabaton album, there are a few surprises, there's a bit of a mindfuck towards the end of this one. Let's see what you think!

Q: Could you tell us about your YouTube channel?

S: Sabaton History Channel. A YouTube channel launched on February 7th this year, the whole idea is to tell people more about the background of our songs, the historical background. We had the idea 15 years ago when we wrote the first album about war history, and we were discussing how people can find out more regarding what the songs are actually about. We can put inside the booklet some little texts explaining what song is about what, with lyrics, but today people don't really buy CDs so they don't read the booklets anymore. We decided the best way to explain it was through a documentary series. It's not something we could have produced 15 years ago, it takes quite a big team, on the team we have three proper historians and two history students working, and a few others, so it's a team of ten people in total working on every episode to make it happen. This is something we built up over time, and we actually came across Indy, who is the host of "The Great War," in our TV Show, we came across him some years ago when he was interviewing me about Sabaton's relationship to WWI. When we were about to do the new album, we contacted him, set up a meeting, and instantly agreed that it was time to launch Sabaton History Channel. Now we have done 20 episodes, we're growing faster than we could predict. The idea is that we will cover every single Sabaton song. With [this channel] we can actually teach history, and evolve into something different than we were before. The amount of history we've studied in the past 15 years, I think it's given us a better understanding of the world, a more open mindset



and understanding toward different cultures, different people, why the world looks like it does, and if this is something that's made my life better, if we can do that for other people, then I see nothing bad in it.

Q: Does this new album differ from previous Sabaton albums?

S: You'll know it's a Sabaton album, but this one is a bit more dark, more atmospheric. It's natural when you talk about the Great War, it's a very dark period in man's history, so if you compare that to our two previous ones... conflict is shit, don't get me wrong, but they were more about victory and celebration, so in a way, this topic, knowing we're going to write about it for this album, absolutely made it a bit of a darker story.

www.sabaton.net

PHOTO SOURCE: sabaton.net

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The Slyde

Interview by Roger the Shrubber

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking with and what are you most infamous for?

Nate: We are THE SLYDE FROM CANADA! Which is what we'll have to get used to saying when we play in Germany in a couple of weeks. We are infamous for "not being metal enough" to elitist metalheads, and we fucking love it.

AU: Give us a brief history of the band, who are you and what are you all about?

N: My name's Nate; I play guitar, sing lead vocals and drive The Slyde bus; Sarah plays keyboards and synths and is by far the most attractive person in the band; Alberto plays bass guitar and sings backups, and is also a member of the long list of ex-Annihilator members; and Andrew plays drums and has very nice smelling hair. We also have a second drummer and longtime songwriter, Brendan Soares, who's been in the band since

2010, but he's been very busy touring with other bands lately, so Andrew has stepped in to fill the void. The band was birthed in 2009, spawning from the death and aftermath of Nate's previous melodic death metal band called Atma. Fast forward 10 years and we've released two demos, two EPs, and two LPs, and have played nearly 200 shows in Canada - mostly self-booked and self-promoted tours - including gigs at Canadian Music Week, IndieWeek, and Ottawa Bluesfest.

AU: Can you describe your music, for those of us who've never heard it?

N: It's prog-rock/metal with catchy hooks, tasty solos, and a strong pop sensibility. We draw influences from contrasting sources - from European melodic metal, 90s western alternative and grunge, 80s/90s Japanese video game music - but we like to think we are suitable for fans of Rush, Dream Theater, Coheed and Cambria, Haken, and Megadeth.

AU: Does your most recent album explore any

particular themes or topics?

N: Since our 2011 album *Feed The Machine*, we've been exploring topics that discuss environmentalism and sociopolitical issues. We've continued that trend with our 2012 EP *New World Sympathy*, and with our latest album, *Awakening*, although the last album's songs touch upon a wider range of topics. For example, "Walk With Me" is about media control and propaganda, whereas our ballad "Back Again" reflects on Carl Sagan's Pale Blue Dot concept. "These Wars" is about the impact that the use of cellphones has had on our society, and "Fading" takes a more sci-fi approach, talking about extraterrestrial life monitoring humans on Earth, but they are reluctant to make contact with us, because of our destructive nature, to ourselves and to our own planet. So we've moved a bit away from the "pissed off about the government" attitude that we may have expressed in past releases...

AU: You recently won the Canadian Wacken Metal Battle, which will see you playing Wacken Open Air in Germany this August. What can you tell us about the experience?

N: Honestly, we treated the whole competition very lightheartedly, as if it was just any other show we'd play... But once we got on a plane to go to Calgary for the 2019 Canadian final, then we were like, ok, we have to win this. I think the biggest thing we can take from the whole experience is that we feel a little more accepted now by the metal community. We always felt like the black sheep/underdog throughout the entire competition, because we're a borderline fringe act, with a lot of crossover elements that aren't too common in vanilla metal. So we're very pleased that, we were chosen as the Canadian ambassadors by the judges throughout the whole thing, and I hope that Wacken will enjoy our quirky melodic prog metal that we'll bring to the international final.

AU: What are you most looking forward to about Wacken Open Air? Will you be planning a European tour or playing any other dates around the performance?

N: This is literally a dream come true for us. Since we started the band, our goal was to always get the opportunity to play in Europe, where we strongly believe our music would thrive. It's over a lot of peoples' heads in Canada, so the fact that we're playing at the world's biggest heavy metal festival is huge for us. The whole experience is going to be something we'll never forget I'm sure. We just want to meet new people and network with other bands in the competition; hook up with some of our contacts we've made over the years that will be there, and just take it all in. Due to timing, we were unable to organize a European tour for the band, so we are solely focusing on making the most out of the festival, and try to establish connections for future touring

opportunities in Europe, and to attempt to become another sought after export from Canada for international markets.

AU: Tell us about the crowdfunding campaign you launched to help fund your way to Wacken.

N: Well, after the Calgary trip and all the costs incurred with that, and booking the tickets to Germany, along with other traveling fees, accommodations, food for everyone when we're overseas, etc, I quickly realized that I was breaking the bank. Wacken Metal Battle Canada donated \$2000 to us after winning, and Big Nate Productions and CJSW 90.9fm in Calgary donated an additional \$1000, which was amazing of them, but, it still wasn't enough to cover all the costs. We're pretty overwhelmed by all the support we've received thus far. We're not quite at our target just yet, but we're slowly approaching it (over two thirds of the way there), and the amount we've already received has been a major help financially for us. I just mailed out the first batch of "Mega Merch Packs" to some of our donors - one of our rewards that we're offering to donors. Still hoping someone claims the Baseball game reward - I want to go see the Blue Jays lose with an awesome fan, haha!

AU: Speaking of touring, you're set to undertake a Canadian 10th-anniversary tour immediately after your Wacken performance - what cities will you be visiting and are there any you're particularly stoked to play?

N: We're playing it safe and sticking to the Ontario market, where we've always done well with over the years. Cornwall, Kingston, Ottawa, and Toronto have always been good to us, and Cornwall is always a bit of a homecoming for myself and our drummer Brendan, as we were born and raised there. And the crowds are always nutty - they sure know how to party. We're also planning to play some old material that we haven't touched in years, so we're also excited about that.

AU: What does life on the road look like with The Slyde, do you have a tour survival kit?

N: Basically three dudes and one babe in a stinky band van, haha. We were road warriors back in the day, touring a lot between 2010-2013. We really cut our teeth back then, and learned a lot about touring. My brother Daniel was our tour manager and roadie, and we really miss having him around. We've been way more selective about touring and shows lately, and I suppose as you mature as people and as a band, you pick and choose what's in the best interest for the band and for everyone involved. Tour survival kit? Our running joke back in the day was, if we didn't smoke six joints before the show, we would suck, haha. There's a lot of

road between cities in Canada, so we needed to occupy ourselves somehow in transit.

AU: What's next for you as a group? Do you have anything exciting coming up that you can tell us about?

N: After our 10-year anniversary shows, we'll be hitting the studio to release something very special before the end of the year. I won't say much, but it will definitely be something to commemorate our 10th anniversary. And I know I'm jumping the gun a little here, but we'll be most likely booking for the festival season for next year, and working on a new album for a 2020 release.

AU: Final words for our readers?

N: Oh, is this where I shamelessly promote?! Check out our music videos, social media, etc by searching @theslydecanada - visit <http://theslyde.ca> and listen to our music and spread the love.

theslyde.bandcamp.com

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MONCTON MALFUNCTION



Diner Drugs

Interview by Roger the Shrubber

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking with and what are you most infamous for?

Jackson Landry: Yo! We're actually all here! Most infamous for definitely being the first band to ask about drink tickets, haha!

AU: Give us a brief history of the band, who are you and what are you all about?

JL: We've been jamming for about four years now, we were all in Moncton bands before this (Bongjovi, Human Comedy) those bands all sort of started slowing down, which eventually led to Diner Drugs forming. Chris actually waited for me to turn 19 before asking to jam so we could get into the bar gigs stress free, hahah! What are we about?! Just love playing and writing tunes! Playing new places and making new friends!

AU: Can you describe your music, for those of

us who've never heard it?

JL: We like to call it stoner punk. Would say stoner rock but it's a lot faster than that, I guess!

AU: You're set to release a new album, *As Is*, this September, tell us about it! What can we expect to hear? How does it compare with your past releases?

AU: Yeah! *As Is* drops September 13th! This record is a lot faster and in your face than our first release. We wrote this record together, all four of us played a part of writing each song, vs the first record, where we were discovering our sound and we sort of slapped it together. *As Is* has some more vocal harmonies and we like to think is way catchier.

AU: Does the new album explore any particular themes or topics?

JL: Not really I suppose, we went from teenage angst to adult angst, haha. The lyrics on this record mean a lot more to us I would say, just how we feel and want to write about.

AU: You've spent quite a lot of this summer on the road, first with Cancer Bats and several other short trips throughout the east coast. How have those been?

JL: Touring's fun! We had the super pleasure of supporting the Cancer Bats and Dead Quiet east coast tour, literally the best time! Best people to rip with and we definitely learned a lot from that one! We did an Ontario and Quebec run shortly after, which was really fun as well. We played a lot of new cities in Ontario that we never played before, so that was tight, made some new homies!

AU: Do you have an essential tour survival kit? Are you guys still travelling in a minivan? What is your secret to successful minivan touring?

JL: Water, weed and comedy specials are essentials for sure! Oh and sandwiches from

Chris's mom! Hell yeah we still tour in the minivan! I

guess the secret would be to give yourself some time to chill, like stop a few times to stretch or smoke or whatever. Touring in a minivan is definitely a real-life game of Tetris!

AU: What's the craziest thing that's happened on tour so far?

JL: Craziest tour story... On the first Ontario tour one night after a gig we were loading gear back in the minivan, and a random person kind of approached us in a weird way, this person definitely didn't come to the gig, so we were sort of like, "Hey man what's up?" And there was zero response. Couple minutes later of him watching the van and standing next to us, he asked for a smoke, so we all gave him one out of fear haha, but then he started laughing like crazy uncontrollably. Not super wild but we definitely had no idea what was going on, haha. Also on that exact same night, we saw a little kid like maybe five or six just sitting on his bike in a drive way staring into nothing and this was at 3am so it kind of creeped us out.

AU: You're heading out in September with Heart Attack Kids - where will those tour dates be? Any plans to come west?

JL: Yeah! We hit the road in September for the *As Is* release tour with our best pals in Heart Attack Kids! The dates are:

09.13 HALIFAX - GUS'S PUB
09.14 MONCTON - THE CAVEAU
09.15 CHARLOTTETOWN - SPORTSMANS
09.17 SAINT JOHN - PEPPERS PUB
09.18 FREDERICTON - THE CAPITAL COMPLEX
09.19 QUEBEC CITY - BAR LA SOURCE
09.20 MONTREAL - TURBO HAUS .

We're super excited to meet up wit HAK again, those dudes are the best. West coast is definitely on the radar, just don't think the minivan will get there.

AU: What's next for Diner Drugs, anything exciting in the works that you can tell us about?

JL: *As Is* comes out in September! We already started working on a new record as well! Main focus right now is to tour and make some more music videos.

AU: What are your long term goals as a band?

JL: We are really hoping to get some of Europe under our belts very soon, along with some more North American dates. More records, more videos and a band mansion would be super cool, hahah!

AU: What do you guys do in your spare time when you're not playing music?

JL: Nothing super crazy honestly, just work and chill! We have a cool little Friday party jam every week which helps us get to Friday, Jesse has a super cool glass blowing studio (Maritimer Glassworks) check that out! Chris does the social media for a car dealership and myself and Jordan are carpenters!

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already?

JL: Fun fact is we all try to learn "Rock You Like a Hurricane," by The Scorpions every jam (never looked at the tabs once) and get a little closer every time! It's not ready yet though, hahah!

AU: Any final words for our readers?

JL: Hey! Thanks for reading! We have a new record called *As Is* dropping September 13th, pre order on limited white vinyl over at our Bandcamp! Then we hit the road with Heart Attack Kids supporting the record, dates above!

More tours, more videos and more minivans are happening, so stay tuned!

Thank you everyone who supports us!

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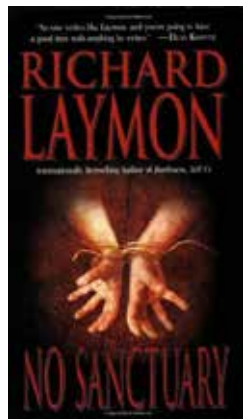
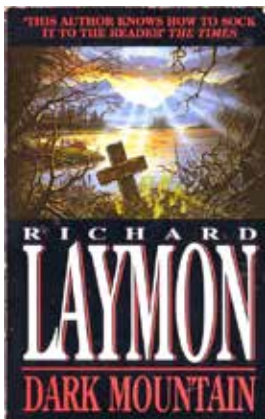
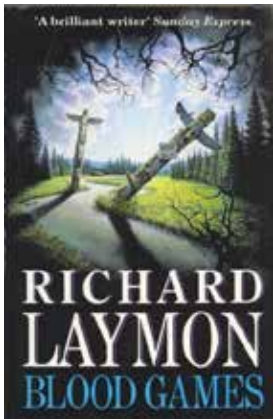
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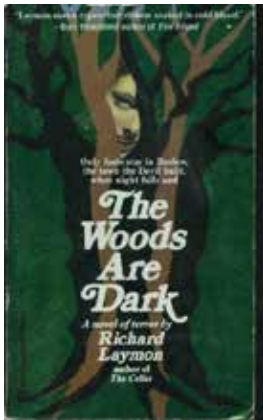
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By Vince D'Amato

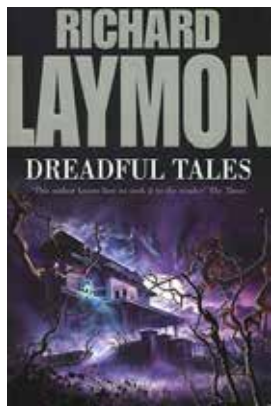
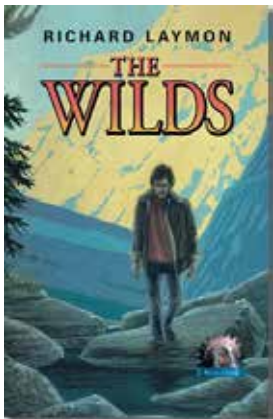
As much as I love the association of horror with Halloween as the next horror fan, there is something that I just absolutely love about the horror of summer! Maybe this is why, when it came to horror franchises, I'd always been preferential towards the *Friday the 13th* franchise – I have never at any point in time wavered from the fact that this was my favourite series, even over *Halloween* and *A Nightmare on Elm Street*. Even the gritty, dusty, sun-glow southern summer aesthetics of the *Texas Chainsaw* films fall into second place after the first seven *Friday* movies for me. But actually, my intent is not to talk at any sort of length about these summer-themed horror film franchises – instead, I felt inspired, after a long summer walk in the woods, to talk about the late, great horror author Richard Laymon, who died suddenly of a massive heart attack on Valentine's Day in 2001 at the early age of fifty-four. Already, by then, the prolific and literately energetic horror scribe had penned nearly four dozen novels, at that time rivaling the output of fellow prolific horror author Stephen King. At the time of his death, Richard Laymon was at the brink of his popularity and commercial reach – previously, throughout the nineties, his books were far better received by horror fans in the UK, Australia, and Canada, and as such his books were far easier to find via his UK and Canadian publisher at the time, Headline Features. But by 2001 he had not only secured a US publisher, Leisure Horror, who were heavily into pushing American reprints of Laymon's novels, but he had finally won the Bram Stoker Award through the Horror Writer's Association for his 2000 novel, *The Traveling Vampire Show*. Sadly, he would never be able to accept this award in person. Subsequently, his wife Ann Laymon and good friend Dean Koontz (yes, the other famous horror author) discovered three completed novels which were then published posthumously through to 2005 by Leisure. A few years after this, as Laymon's books were starting to fall out-of-print from both Leisure Horror and Headline Features in the UK and Canada, they became even more sought-after by used bookstores and booksellers throughout North America. Now, sadly, eighteen years after his untimely death, horror fans don't seem to talk about him anymore. The official Richard Laymon website, "Richard Laymon Kills!" is still viewable online but appears to not have been updated since 2011, and his exciting, sexy, gory novels were even ignored in the recently-published non-fiction book *Paperbacks from Hell* by Grady Hendrix (which is actually a really phenomenal read, by the way). But hardcore Laymon fans have known for decades that his strength and shining moments lay in his set-in-the-woods horror novels, which

were always a tense, wild, gripping, and grizzly treat to those who knew his works well.

One of the absolute best of Laymon's horror-in-the-woods literary repertoire was also one of his first; *The Woods Are Dark*, published in 1981, this was actually Laymon's second horror novel and is such a fast-paced ride of suspense, horror and gore it's stuck with me as one of my absolute favourites of his works, even though I first read this nearly twenty years ago. Like *The Woods Are Dark*, most of Laymon's woods horror yarns concern extremely likable and fun protagonists who run afoul of deranged cult members or psychos (or whole families of psychos) who then hunt them through the dark and dangerous environments of nighttime nature – yes, the woods. Following this second novel, Laymon wouldn't visit or have his characters camp



out in the woods again for a few years, until his next-best camping/horror novel, 1986's *Tread Softly* (published in 1992 as *Dark Mountain* in the UK and Australia), and then again with his 1992 book *Blood Games*. I actually read *Tread Softly* while on a camping trip in the woods back in 1996 after finding it in a used bookstore in a small town in the interior of BC. There's also a longer and somewhat amusing story regarding this, but I'll save you from expanding on that here.



Living in Canada, it was fantastic to see a constant stream of Laymon's books being released by his UK publisher Headline throughout the early nineties, which were being ordered and stocked by bookstores including Coles (which is now Indigo), A&B Sound (a West Coast Canadian record store that is now several years out-of-business), and even Save-On-Foods, a huge grocery chain which used to house a very impressive bookstore inside their various West Coast locations. When *Blood Games* was first released, I purchased that one from A&B Sound in Vancouver, but it wasn't until Leisure Horror reprinted it in the 2000s that I finally read it. The plotline of the book, for me, was one of Laymon's most memorable ones, partly because it was clearly inspired by the Troma horror classic *Mother's Day*. Both Laymon's *Blood Games* and Troma's *Mother's Day* concern a group of female university student who head out on a camping trip in the woods and run into some horrifying villains – but specifically, it's the non-linear path of the actual plotline that is so clearly similar, with each of the university girls flashing back on an individual experience at university before the narrative pulls us back into the current horror-in-the-woods scenario. Laymon's *Blood Games* is a fantastic and fast-paced horror novel, so I never want to take anything away from that in and of itself – but almost as if nailing this homage home, Laymon himself actually directly referenced *Mother's Day* in the pages of his 2001 hiking-in-the-woods/horror novel *No Sanctuary*, which

Absolute Horror

was published around the time he'd passed away, and was also his last real horror-in-the-wilderness novel-length tale, and every bit as exciting and memorable as any of his previous horror outings.

While Laymon, as a horror writer, would often detour his protagonists through the dark and horrifying woods at various point throughout many his novels (forest-themed or not), *The Woods Are Dark*, *Tread Softly*, *Blood*

Games, and *No Sanctuary* stand out not only as a wilderness-themed horror series within the genre literature of one of horror's most amazing authors, but also as stand-out novels within the camping/woods/wilderness/horror sub-genre of horror-lit altogether; and these were only Laymon's take on the horror sub-genre in novel form. Laymon

also wrote extensively, and very entertainingly, in this sub-genre via the shorter story platform, published in several collections during the 90s and 2000s such as "Fiends," "Madman Stan and Other Stories" (limited edition from Cemetery Dance publications), and "Dreadful Tales." The absolute standout in all of these short (or shorter) punches of wilderness horror is his novella "The Wilds," published in a stand-alone edition, also from Cemetery Dance, which is written in a first-person journal point-of-view of our antagonist, Ned Champion, who takes a hiking trip through the woods alone following the breakup of his girlfriend Cora. Nothing could go wrong, in the woods, alone, at night... right...?

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Sabaton took to the stage again in Manowar's place.

Some of the stages are a bit of a trek from each other so like most festivals, you have to plan your day wisely, deciding what's a priority to you. There is a Hellfest app which helped to keep things organized in the heat and perma-beer-buzzed state. That being said, we did a lot of running around. Friday's highlights were, Trollfest, Hank Von Hell, the Descendents, Diamond Head, and Hellhammer. But a shit ton of other bands performed including: Gojira, Canada's own Sum 41, Me First and the Gimme Gimmes, and Dropkick Murphys.

Saturday was another mega day and I'm still trying to grasp seeing Whitesnake, Def Leppard, ZZ Top and KISS in one day, as well as my fav picks for the day The Adicts and The Sisters of Mercy. Also taking to the stage were Sham69, Eagles of Death Metal, Archspire and Cradle of Filth.

Sunday = Slayer day, performing their last ever show in France. It was epic, so many pyrotechnics, it was definitely the festival highlight for me. Also killing it on Sunday were Anthrax,



Lynyrd Skynyrd, Testament, Lamb of God, Slash, Cannibal Corpse, Municipal Waste, Tormmentor, Stone Temple Pilots and Tool. Yeah...it's a seriously intense three days.

Cold showers, pick pockets, all-night campground singing, queuing every single time you have to pee and hot sweaty crowds of people have not deterred me, that's saying a lot. Save up and make it happen if you can.

If you do make it here are some practical suggestions:

- Arrive a day early (if you can) to set up your tent and stock up with food for the weekend, by Thursday night when we arrived it was already slim pickings for tent space.
 - Bring and wear sunscreen. I know I'm not your mama, but honestly a burn on the first day and you'll be in pain for the rest of the weekend, it's not worth it.
 - There is a massive potable water station just before leaving the campgrounds, use it...drink water.
 - Keep your phones and wallets out of plain sight and out of your pockets. European crime rings are the real deal.
- 2020 will mark Hellfest's 15th anniversary, no line-up announced as of yet, but be on the lookout.

www.hellfest.fr/en



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| <div>SUNDAY 11</div> <div>HOOTENANNY</div> <div>OPEN MIC - 4PM</div> <div>FAN KLUB - 8PM</div> <div>RECORD PARTY</div> | <div>MONDAY 12</div> <div>THE CONVALESCENCE</div> <div>A FEASTING BEAST</div> <div>POUND</div> <div>TIBERIOUS MERGE</div> <div>9PM / \$15</div> | <div>TUESDAY 13</div> <div>BLACK SHEEP COMEDY</div> <div>OPEN MIC - 8PM</div> <div>KARAOKE</div> <div>9PM - BOTH FREE</div> | <div>WEDNESDAY 14</div> <div>8PM - 1AM</div> <div>FACTORY</div> <div>ELECTRONIC DANCE PARTY</div> <div>FREE</div> | <div>THURSDAY 15</div> <div>PRECIOUS DUDES</div> <div>STINKHORN</div> <div>THRASHLORD</div> <div>8PM / \$10</div> | <div>FRIDAY 16</div> <div>GNAR GNARS</div> <div>SQUIDZ</div> <div>SURROUNDED BY IDIOTS</div> <div>DIGRESSION</div> <div>9PM / \$10</div> | <div>SATURDAY 17</div> <div>FIFTY FIFTY</div> <div>ARTS COLLECTIVE</div> <div>2019 ROCK LOTTERY</div> <div>8PM</div> |
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Dropkick Murphys

Press Conference with vocalist Al Barr and bassist Ken Casey

Q: How are you finding Hellfest so far?

Al Barr: Oh great so far. We love it.

Ken Casey: It's our third time and it's been wonderful for us to gain new a new audience in France and the people, particularly at metal festivals in Europe, they are very kind and welcoming to Dropkick Murphys. It's been a very pleasant surprise.

Q: For some of us it's very important to relate with the lyrics of the music that we love. How are lyrics important to you?

AB: Well I think any song that we either write, co-write, work together on, I mean for Dropkick Murphys, I think it has to come from the heart. First it has to come from a place of importance in terms of our own family values, the way that we were raised. I think that's first and foremost and the most important thing for us and then to make that connection with the listener.

KC: I don't think we write many songs from like 20... absoluteunderground.tv... please recycle this magazine... share with a friend...

some vague perspective about something we read about in the newspaper, it's usually about life experience or family's history or our upbringing or things we face in our own lives.

Q: In 2006 you received an attack during a live show in Rome by an extreme right political group. Do you think you'll go back to Rome and what is your relationship with Italy?

KC: We love Italy. We just played Italy. It's been great to us. Unfortunately, that was our only time to Rome. That was a very bad night for the people that were attending the concert.

AB: They threw a mace grenade into the audience. We had to evacuate.

KC: We travel with the band, the guys that work for us and at that particular tour we had an all-girl band opening for us. We don't travel with security any of that stuff. So when we arrive at the venue and it has maybe two security guards and the show is attacked by 30 to 40 people. That's sad. So yeah we'll come back, just with a few more security guards next time.

Q: How do you keep the energy alive after more than a 20 year career?

KC: The simple answer is music keeps you young,

man. I just turned 50, he's a little older but I feel we feel like we're in our 20s, we sure as hell act like we're in our 20s.

AB: The energy from the audience lifts us up you and we feed off each other. We're just very lucky to do what we do.

Q: If you had if you could have any band cover one of your songs. Which band would you choose. Which song would you choose and would you like them to do it in their style or do it like the Dropkick Murphys?

KC: I mean obviously we're talking like fantasy world that would never happen it would probably be AC/DC.

AB: Or Bruce Springsteen.

KC: Bruce Springsteen sang on our albums, he sang on two of our songs but we've never actually got him to do one of our songs. He's played with us live, that was pretty awe inspiring.

AB: But in a fantasy world it would be awesome to see a band like you said ACDC or Iron Maiden do it like Dropkick Murphys style. John Fogerty from Creedence Clearwater Revival was quoted in an interview recently, he actually namedrops Dropkick Murphys as saying he loves our version of "Fortunate Son."

Q: What makes Irish music and Celtic music so great to party to, in your opinion?

KC: Well I think that it's the melody of the extra instrumentation. You know if you're taking a standard punk rock song and you have the drive of a banjo line or an accordion riff it gives the song so much more melody. From a from a lyrical content, the Irish are an interesting breed in the sense that like the song could be about the greatest celebration and they sing it like it's a celebration, the song could be about death and horrible things and they still sing it like it's a celebration. I think it's the spirit overall.

Q: What advice would you give to younger musicians?



KC: When we started twenty three years ago, we pressed our own singles we had our own label. We got reviews in magazines like *Maximum Rock and Roll* and people would mail order for a record. We'd fill the mail order ourselves, we'd silkscreen T-shirts ourselves. I made a catalogue that I drew with my own hands. Then it would take three weeks to get to them, the whole process was that such a slow pace. Now it's like boom social media, it's just so different. But when you gain those fans at a slow pace like that. They stay with you and there's more value.

AB: I've done a lot of visiting schools and talked about just being a guy in the music industry and being in a band and some of the first questions I always get whether it's a little kid or an older person, is how do I get famous? I think the most important thing as a young band is not to focus on any of those things. Do the music for yourself, write the songs for yourself, believe in yourself, and when you do that you know, it's an old adage, "If you build it they will come." You got to believe in yourself. But it's a long haul and there's no recipe for success. So don't think about success. Think about the love that you have for music because if you're doing it for ego, for followers, for any of that bullshit, you're doing it for the wrong reasons. Walk away.

KC: Although I will just say in closing on this question if you do apparently want success fast, it's face tattoos.

dropkickmurphys.com/



Archspire

Interview with Dean Lamb & Oli Peters
By AU Editorial

Absolute Underground: Who are we speaking with today?

Dean Lamb: Hey! This is Dean, but I'll be passing it off to Oli for a couple questions here.

AU: Where in the world are you now?

Dean: Where in the world are we right now? We are back home after spending a few weeks in Europe! We are committing a lot of our time at home to writing some new music. Many days spent during the week at our disgusting rehearsal spot going through recordings and auditioning new riff ideas. It's time consuming, but it's the number one thing on our minds right now.

AU: How was Hellfest?! Tell us about the experience!

DL: Oh man, Hellfest was insane. Most of us hadn't ever been to the festival, so just that experience of attending was something incredible.

Playing the Altar stage in front of 10,000+ people, having a circle pit the size of my apartment erupt during our set, the whole day spent dealing with extremely polite professional staff, that pretty much sums it up. We also got to witness a slew of legendary bands, met up with friends, and actually spent the entire weekend there just hanging out. Overall, it was something we hope to do again and again.

AU: Tell us about the Clam. What is The Clam?

Oli Peters: Well, I have VERY clammy hands, to the point where my band won't high five me. I'll say "slam the clam" but they'll deny the clam. So one night I got the crowd to be completely silent and all do the one hand clap just to hear how it sounds, and it sounded disgusting. Like an army of ninjas beating off! After the set our sound guy said it was embarrassing and cringed. So I started replacing "Make some noise!" Or "Put your fucking hands up!" To



"Let me see those clams!" "Horns down clams up!" Just because it pissed him off. And because let's face it, the horns are cheesy and

played out. It's time to retire those horns and gets those clam hands in the air, get em sizzling, get em tossing, cook them things up! Clam Hand Clan ain't nothin ta shuck with! (Also, it's an amputee inclusive way of applauding).

AU: What other bands were you most stoked to see at Hellfest? Did you check out King Diamond?

OP: Well we are super close with both the Revocation dudes and the Aussie cunts (it's cool to use that word if you're referring to an Aussie) in Psychropic, so it was rad to party with them! I am a huge Diamond banger and I was so bummed that we missed his set but our shuttle was leaving back to the hotel so we had to leave. It would have been awesome to see Manowar but they bitched out hard because apparently, "Other bands play..." Manowar bails!

Tool sounded amazing but overall I had the most fun watching Cannibal Corpse from back stage.

Corpse Grinder is (in my opinion) the best and most brutal vocalist ever.

AU: What's next for Archspire?

OP: We have our first ever European headlining tour coming up at the end of November that we're super excited about. Tech Trek Europe with Archspire, Beneath The Massacre, Vulvodynia, Inferi. Aside from that, we're just working on the new album, writing five days a week from now 'til November.

AU: How do you guys survive so much touring? What's your secret?

OP: Well we rip into each other a ton, about everything. If someone gets mad or bitchy about something we just make fun of them until they feel stupid. We call it chicken blood (which I won't go into detail about) but basically you're with the same people 24 hours a day for a month at a time so it becomes easy to make minor issues into big ones. So making each other feel stupid about holding on to shit helps us let things go more easily and keep things light and fun. It also makes us absolutely hate each other, though.

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already?

OP: That everyone in the band is uncircumcised. Everyone should know about this.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

OP: Stay Tech! ...also piss.

archspire.bandcamp.com/

PHOTO CREDIT: Alex Morgan





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Hank Von Hell

Absolute Underground: We bought you a vanilla ice cream. I got coconut flavour.

Hank Von Hell: Coconut. It's deadliest fruit in the world cause it falls down on people at beaches, so I don't eat coconut ice cream. I don't want to support that deadly industry.

AU: You're going with the vanilla today. You're playing it safe.

HVH: Vanilla ice. It's always a tribute to Vanilla Ice, you know, ice ice baby. Oh shit. This is good. I'm getting brain freeze.

AU: Who are we talking to and what are you most infamous for?

HVH: Suddenly, like everything became really existentialist. Thank God for this ice cream. I'm Hank Von Hell and I'm most infamous for my awareness campaign for falling coconuts.

AU: What first got you into like music or punk rock?

HVH: It just was there all the time. We just grew up

with that shit.

AU: So what was it like in Norway for influences?

HVH: I grew up in a musical sort of family. My father was a music teacher and he got expelled from school in the 50s for playing Elvis tunes on the accordion. So it was pretty clear that rebellion was part of the deal.

AU: How did you first join Turbonegro?

HVH: They were a small underground thing in Oslo and played in lots of underground clubs. The singer

Turbonegro.

AU: You're back bigger and stronger with your solo stuff, tell me about the comeback.

HVH: Well I kind of got really fed up with the whole scene, I went dormant for some years. And the other guy, this boring dude called Hans Erik, took my body and then started some sort of self realization shit, and he became more and more pathetic. So, I woke up from the sleep, and said, fuck, I want the Hank body back and I just took it back and here I am.



table was full of booze, and it was six o'clock in the morning.

AU: They just wanted the most controversial name?

HVH: Mainly like a provocative answer to all these questions about whether it was correct or not.

AU: Is it true that at the end of the first North American Turbonegro tour, you guys got stuck in Seattle and then Kurt Cobain put you up and introduced you to heroin?

HVH: That would've been a fucking amazing story. It didn't happen, but can I please say yes to it? Because I want that to have been my introduction to heroin.

AU: It's an urban legend I guess.

HVH: It is?! Fuck man.

AU: Did you get stuck in Seattle?

HVH: You don't get stuck in Seattle. If you have to stay there for a while you go and get like seafood. And at the time Kurt Cobain was alive, you could get both seafood and black tar heroin.

AU: Have you ever been mistaken for King Diamond at a metal festival like this?

HVH: No, never. He and me, we are brothers. I always love that guy, but there's this weird little

fuck called Neil Diamond and he stole everything from me. So if you see Neil Diamond, you just tell him that I'm pissed.

AU: Do you enjoy the French custom of the double kiss? I'm not used to that. I'm Canadian.

HVH: Well you're not the French Canadian then because in Quebec they don't do the double kissing. They do the triple blowjob kiss.

AU: Do you remember playing a giant festival

in Norway called Øyafestivalen? It was on the ruins of an old castle and Turbonegro and Mayhem played and it had fireballs and explosions. Is that a pretty big deal there?

HVH: Well, it used to be, at that time that was the festival where you could get the coolest Norwegian rock acts. But right now it has become like some pretentious hipster pop thing, and it becomes more about making sure that the catering is vegan than the music is good.

AU: So what did people have to look forward to when you come to Canada for the live show?

HVH: With Turbo I played in Canada a lot and coming to Canada, it's like meeting Americans that actually are Scandinavians in some weird way, you know? So I think it would be like some sort of brethren thing. Rock and roll is here to save the world. We're gonna love each other so much that it's going to be awkward all

the time because we just want to stay in the hug forever.

www.hankvonhell.com



got cancer and couldn't come to rehearsal one day. And I showed up and they asked me who I was and what I was doing there. And I basically told them that I was their new lead singer.

AU: Had you been in the bands before that?

HVH: I had a small hardcore band called INRI, but we just released a cassette and a seven inch, then I just jumped the train to Turbonegro.

AU: And the guy that had cancer, he was okay?

HVH: He survived his cancer.

It was pretty hardcore. But now he's travelling around with one of the former bass players of



AU: You got Steve-o to help with the new video. You were also on Viva La Bam. Do you think that helped Turbonegro's exposure in North America?

HVH: Yeah, probably. People are still ranting about that show. Bam did a great thing taking this weird bunch of fucks onto the show. Then we went further, we were part of *Jackass 2*. We were also the intro music for Wildboyz, so the relationship with all different, various Jackass guys have always been there. I was a really stoked that Steve-o will was so fast to say, hell yeah, if you are coming back, I want to be part of that.

AU: Tell us about your solo album Egomania.

HVH: Well, when Sony called me I would have never agreed to do a comeback album if it wasn't a set up that I could control where I can be the focus point and have people around me that understand my way of seeing rock. We have found a common denominator to actually create the ultimate rock album. That always should be the purpose. That was the first time I just enjoyed studio work and enjoyed the creative process. I got all my ideas, all my stupid megalomania dreams of my own genius and perfection, I just got to make that into a rock and roll album.

AU: Was your makeup inspired by Alice Cooper?

HVH: I guess Gene Simmons would not share his makeup. There's always been, a little bit of discussion about the Hank makeup. Was it stolen from Alice Cooper? To me it's just evolution.

AU: What's the current state of the Norwegian music scene?

HVH: Right now there is a Scandinavian rock revival. Besides me doing a solo comeback all the other bands are doing their comebacks like Gluecifer and The Hives.

AU: Is it true that they were going to call Turbonegro Nazi Penis?

HVH: It was up on the table, but then again, that





Testament

Panel discussion with vocalist Chuck Billy and guitarist Eric Peterson

Transcribed by AU Editorial

Q: What is the name of the new album, and the date of release?

Chuck Billy: We don't have a name yet, but it's going to come out in late January 2020. The day before we got on the plane we just finished recording all the tracks. Andy Sneap, who's out with Judas Priest, will mix it. So when he gets home, for a couple weeks in July, we'll start the mix. It's going to be a good one!

Q: What is your recording process?

CB: We tried recording live once, and it worked at that point in our lives and career, but I think at this point, especially with technology getting where you can do it at home, Eric records a lot of his tracks on his own at home now, so it just makes the process easier - we don't all live together, so

it's a little difficult to get everybody to be at the same place. We choose to do individual tracks on our own time, so we're never really in the studio together.

Q: How did thrash evolve for you guys?

CB: Well talking for Eric a bit, he was in early Mercyful Fate and stuff like that, I think when you first start a band, you get inspired by something and we were fortunate enough to have a lot of punk rock in the Bay Area, and when Metallica and bands like Exodus started playing more thrash, that kind of Mercyful Fate influence sped up the tempos a little bit. When you're young, you want that kind of aggression, and I think us coming from the Bay Area, which had that punk rock attitude, there was something more to the punk rock, we kind of scared away all the glam metal bands that were coming up at the time, they all moved to LA, so the Bay Area just started this breeding ground of faster paced, aggressive energetic, against the grain attitude. I think a lot of the bands that came out of there, Death Angel, Forbidden, Violence, Testament, all of us had that

Q: What is the direction of the new album, musically speaking?

CB: Musically it's a lot more thrash, more old school... guitar harmonies and stuff. Lyrically, it's a bit more storytelling, kind of evil shit. The label's told us to write something evil, so... Yeah. It's definitely faster than the last record, but I think the way we've been writing the last couple records, we work a long time on the riffs, but when we get in the studio is when we really start putting the pressure on ourselves, and I think we've been working better under pressure. It's not my favourite time of year when it's time to write lyrics and get prepared to do the record, so it gets tough, but it really drives us to reach. When you get to a point where you've written 120 songs, it's a little tough to get inspired, like what else can I write, what else can we do, how do we keep it fresh. I give Eric credit because he doesn't follow anybody else, he has his own taste in music and he brings what he does to Testament, and it always keeps us on our toes, and me especially,



inspiration and that same kind of drive. We didn't know it was something new, we just thought this is what was happening.

because when I hear the riff, I expect like maybe it's going to be old school thrash, maybe, but then when I get it, it's like okay, I hear the thrash but then there's some new elements, and maybe some new chords that he chooses to play that maybe aren't comfortable for me. And when I first hear them, I go wow, that's different... but it pushes me to experiment and challenge myself to try something different and I think that's what keeps the Testament records always sounding different. I'm very proud of what we did, because again we had our backs against the wall, a little pressure on us, and the songs came out great. I think everybody's going to enjoy the record, we have some really good thrash on it, good melodic stuff... there's a little of everything.

Q: Who is your favourite band you've seen live?

Eric Peterson: Touring with, Sabbath with Dio. That was awesome.

CB: We were fortunate to be on that Dehumaniser tour... I think that was Alex's final tour with us, it was a tour through Europe and it was very cold and we spent a lot of time after the shows in the dressing room with Ronnie James Dio just chatting, having a drink and a smoke, it was so cool. It was one of those moments where you're like wow, I can't believe I'm here every night and get to do this. That's one that will always stick in my memory, for sure.

www.testamentlegions.com

PHOTO CREDIT: Gene Ambo



Hellfest in Clisson, France. My name is John Campbell, I play bass in Lamb of God and that's probably what I'm best known for.

AU: Tell us about your Hellfest experience and how many times you've played here?

JC: We've played Hellfest a few times over the years and it's always been a build up. It turned out pretty rough our first time here, the generator powering our stage caught fire in the rain. I don't know if it was lightning or the rain, but we were unfortunately unable to play our set that day, but we got up early enough to see our friends play and got to get drunk early that day. Now we are right smack in the middle of a European run doing festivals on the weekends and some club shows during the week. So quick three and a half weeks and it's been fucking amazing. Not to pat myself on the back too hard, but we've been sounding great and the crowds have been really receptive. To be able to come play these massive crowds, it's fucking amazing, like this is ultimately why musicians do what they do, for the high of having a great show in front of tens of thousands of people.

AU: Who are you stoked to see tonight?

JC: Skynyrd are playing right before us and that's

when we're doing our warm up, but I may have to cut it short a little bit because I've never had the opportunity to see Skynyrd side stage.

AU: It seems like your look is influenced by ZZ Top and Skynyrd?

JC: I love both of those bands and I've seen them both play a few times over the years, but my look is really more laziness. I don't shave and it's great.

AU: What do you like about these festivals?

JC: There's a ton of different bands coming together. We've toured with Anthrax a bunch of times, you normally don't have that opportunity to see everyone on the road when you're headlining or direct support or whatever, you're always seeing the same four bands. That's a great thing about these... like I met Chris Holmes today from W.A.S.P.! That was pretty fucking crazy and totally unexpected.

AU: What's the latest with Lamb of God?

JC: We're doing this tour and when we get home it's time to figure out how this record's going to come together. We want to get the record out before we have some festival dates at the end of the year and just keep plugging forward.

AU: Is it a Richmond, Virginia connection between you and Municipal Waste and GWAR? It seems to be a place that is very creative.

JC: Back in the day VCU used to be an art school and then that populated the surrounding area with art school dropouts. So there was a pool of creative people living somewhere where it was inexpensive to do so. Richmond had a time that cultivated a lot of artistically minded people.

AU: And very supportive. I remember back in the day, that's how I met Municipal Waste, GWAR took them out on tour and they played in Vancouver, BC.

JC: And you know who took us out on our first real tour? GWAR. It was GWAR, Amen and us, in



2000.

AU: What do you remember about Dave Brockie of GWAR?

JC: Dave was a really good friend of mine. The older you get, the more friends you have that pass away, and he is one of my deceased friends that comes to mind more often than I ever would have thought. He was such a huge personality and such an amazing man that I truly miss that dude.

AU: Are you going to come back to Canada?

JC: Please, yes, I love Canada! You have warm personalities.

AU: We just legalized marijuana from coast to coast. Will you be taking advantage of the herbal remedies?

JC: I guess it all depends on the situation right? You know, you have to respect the cultures and laws as they are respected in those cultures.

AU: Final words for Canadian fans?

JC: Man, I love you guys, we're all North American brothers, including our North American brothers down in Mexico, just power through this bullshit we're dealing with right now and I hope that it gets better.

www.lamb-of-god.com

Lamb Of God

*Interview with bassist John Campbell
By Ira Hunter*

Absolute Underground: Where are we at? Who are we talking with and what are you best known for?

John Campbell: Right now we are backstage at





ZZ Top

Press Conference with Billy Gibbons
Intro by Clark Mantei
Legend has it that rock and roll really got its start in 1953 in the Southern States of America. That's a long time ago now indeed... Also in 1953 came the Four Top, a band that remained with the same line up until 1997 and held the record for the longest running band with the same line up of 44 years. That was until 2013, when ZZ Top tied that very record and now hold the record at 50 years and still going strong. With a heavy duty roster of albums to their name, they continuously play worldwide with ZZZero signs of slowing down. There was, in fact, a band in the late 60s called American Band, they were a trio that consisted of Frank Beard on drums and the brothers Rusty and Dusty Hill on guitar and bass duties. In 1969, Rusty moved onto his own music venture and

that's when Billy Gibbons entered, and they changed their name to ZZ Top. Before Billy earned the right to wear his dark shades and grow out the beards that ZZ Top are renowned for, the band played relentlessly around the globe, opening up on bills with the likes of Jimi Hendrix and the Rolling Stones. ZZ Top remains in fine form today and co-headlined Hellfest in France this summer with the likes of KISS among others. Billy Gibbons keeps it real and remains vibrant in 2019. ZZ Top are now indeed legends themselves. Rock Out... Roll On!

Q: How do you feel today?"
Billy Gibbons: If I felt any better, I would be twins.

Q: If you could have any band in the world living or dead cover a ZZ Top song, which song would it be? Which band would it be? And would you like them to do it in their style or would you like them to do it in your style?"
BG: Well, I just saw our friends Deadland Ritual. That's Stevie Stevens on guitar, Matt Sorum on drums, Frankie Perez and Geezer Butler on bass. I'd have them do one in their style.

Q: ZZ Top is the longest running band to never have a lineup change. So how have you managed to keep it together for so long?"
BG: Three separate buses!



Q: Today is the first anniversary of the passing of Vinnie Paul from Pantera. Himself and his brother were massive ZZ Top fans and I just wondered what it meant to you to have their support and what your memories are of the Abbott brothers?"
BG: I just met Dimebag Darrell's wife. Just one month ago I was making a record with Queens of the Stone Age and Dave Grohl was also taking part and he decided to have this big barbecue. So there was this interesting gathering. So we spent one hour telling great stories remembering these lovely guys.

Q: Did you meet the Abbotts and were they total fan boys?
BG: Oh yeah, yep!

Q: I'd like know if ZZ Top is working on new stuff right now?
BG: Yes, ZZ Top has just come out of the studio. I think we are living in a world of singles now. So we're just trying to pick out something interesting. And then I have another solo album coming out which is kind of interesting. It's 'Rhythm and Blues meets Death Metal.'

Q: ZZ Top is very famous for always putting on a incredible live show with lots of stage tricks and guitar tricks. Specifically I'm talking about the spinning guitars. Can we expect any of that in the show tonight?



BG: We actually loaned the spinning guitar to none other than the blues man Buddy Guy. So we might get a little fuzzy tonight.

Q: What kind of tips could you give to young ones wanting to be a rock star?
BG: One important thing is when you're starting out, don't listen to the teacher. Learn to play what you want to hear. If you learn to play what you want to hear, then it's ok.

Q: You appeared on the last Alice Cooper album. Can you tell me more about this cooperation?"
BG: Yeah, it was quite by accident. I was in Santa Monica and he was just coming into the studio and we were just leaving. We said, 'Hey. Where are you going?' He said, "We're going to the studio. And you're coming with me!" I said, "Oh O.K." That's it.

Q: Final words for metalheads?
BG: LOUDER!
www.zztop.com



Amon Amarth

Panel discussion transcribed by AU Editorial
Q: Your most recent album, Berserker, it's a fabulous album, could you tell us about the writing and recording process of the album?
Olavi Mikkonen: Basically we went back to how we wrote albums before *Jomsviking*, because *Jomsviking* was a concept album, so we had to write music to our already-existing lyrical idea. So now we just wrote songs the way we always did. Then we kind of figure out what will fit lyric-wise. But I think the biggest difference is that we did way more pre-production. We recorded all the songs at least three times in different studios before we actually did a main recording.

Q: What are your latest musical discoveries?
Johan Hegg: I only listen to old shit... one band I listened to a bit even before we played with them the other week was Power Trip, that's a pretty good band.

OM: Evil Invaders from Belgium, cool band.

Q: Are your vocals changing at all on the new record? Softer or clean vocals at all?
JH: We did a couple sections with cleaner vocals to emphasize what comes after, really. To really give that extra push for when the song kicks in again. So I don't think that having clean vocals for the sake of having clean vocals is something that we'll ever do, it's not really my style. But if it helps the song and makes it better, I think we should do it. We just wanted to experiment with some different ideas that we haven't done before, I think this was one of those things where we all felt it would emphasize those particular songs by using clean vocals, dynamics.

Q: In a recent interview, Johan said that a lot of your metal influences like Iron Maiden and Judas Priest were coming through on this album, are there any influences that might surprise your listeners that you're putting into the music?
OM: Maybe some movie scores, like *Blade Runner*... that's an inspiration sometimes. Yes.

Q: What instruments do you use on stage?
OM: I use ESP guitars, EX model.
Johan Soderberg: I play Jackson guitars.

Jocke Wallgren: I play Pearl drums, Sabian cymbals, Vic Firth sticks, Evans Drum heads.
Ted Lundstrom: I play bass, a black one. I use Musicman, Stingray, very nice.

Q: A few years back, one of your tour mates, Sabaton, did a cover of one of your songs... do you guys ever consider returning the favour, for them or for another group?
JH: We're not a band that does a lot of covers, we've done it in the past as bonus tracks when we didn't have better ideas. Covers is not our thing. I don't know any Sabaton songs anyway.

Q: What advice would you give any young musicians who want to see themselves where you are, in the future?
OM: Don't quit school. If you have something that you believe in, just do it. Don't listen too much to what other people say or think. Follow your own heart. And practice.

Q: What can we expect from tonight's concert.
JH: We always try to put on an intense show and have some fun onstage. We love to do this and we like to invite the audience to be a party to that, every night. We're going to have some fuckin' fun!

www.amonamarth.com
PHOTO CREDIT: Tomas Giden

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Municipal Waste Big Doggin' It

Interview with bassist Land Phil & guitarist Ryan Waste

By Ira Hunter

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to?

Phil Hall: I am Phil from Municipal Waste.

Ryan Waste: Ryan, as well.

AU: What's your Hellfest experience been like?

RW: No sleep.

PH: We got off the plane and we had literally had

ten minutes to set our shit up and play but it went off great. The crowd was fucking great. Everybody was moshing their dicks off. We had a good time.

AU: Did you see the guy in like the giant inflatable duck?

PH: I saw a giant inflatable pizza slice or something.



AU: The guy surfed on a slice of pizza. What's new with The Waste?

PH: We've got an EP that we've just finished and it's going to be coming out soon in October and we've got some tours planned right around it. Basically a world tour.

AU: What's the name of it?

RW: We can't tell you that yet.

PH: I can tell you that the songs are killer and it sounds like thrash metal.

AU: Who are you stoked to see at Hellfest this weekend?

PH: I want to see Lynyrd Skynyrd today and I definitely want to see Stone Temple Pilots and I'd like to see Emperor.

RW: And it's Slayer's last show in France.

PH: Yeah Slayer, of course, and Carpathian Forest.

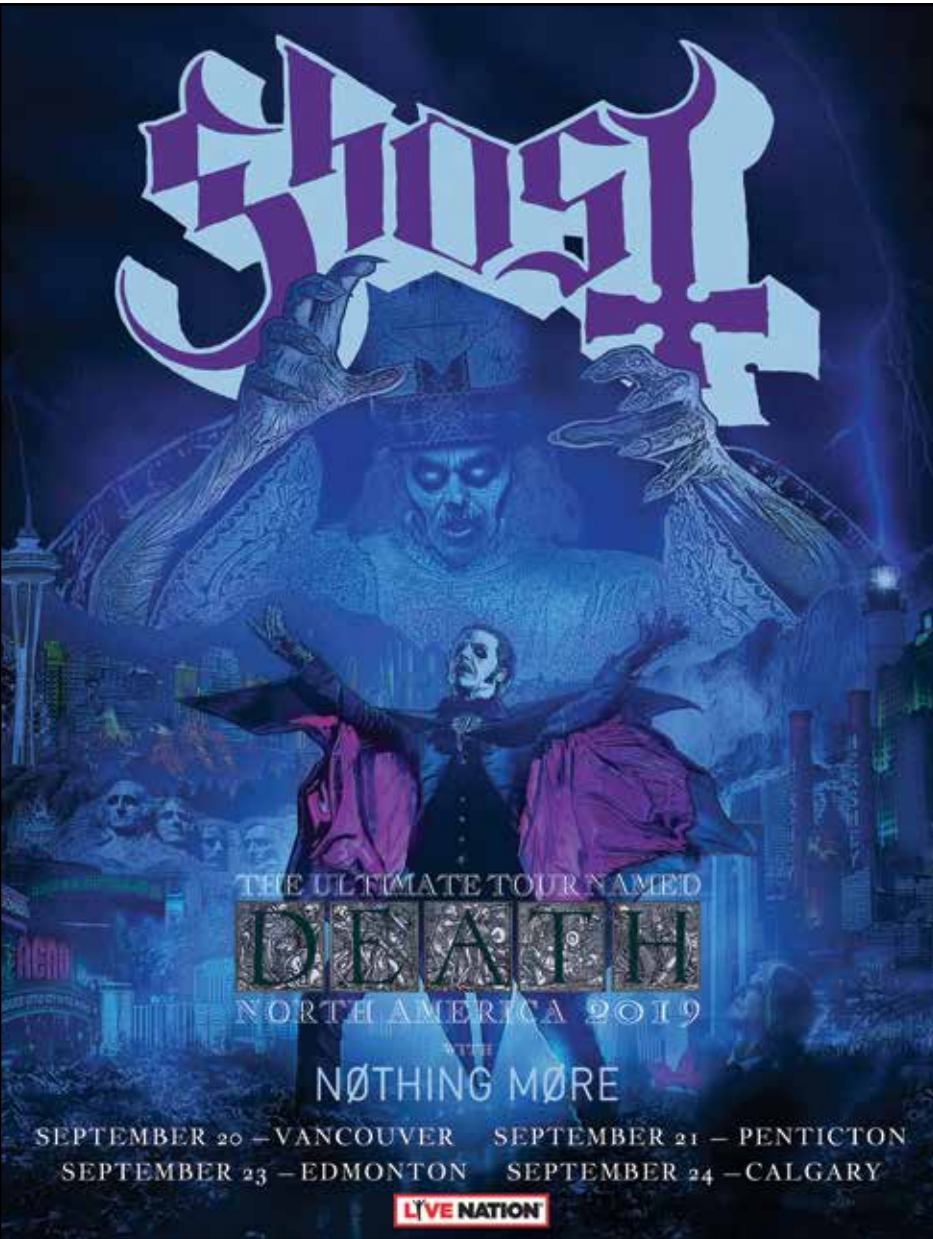
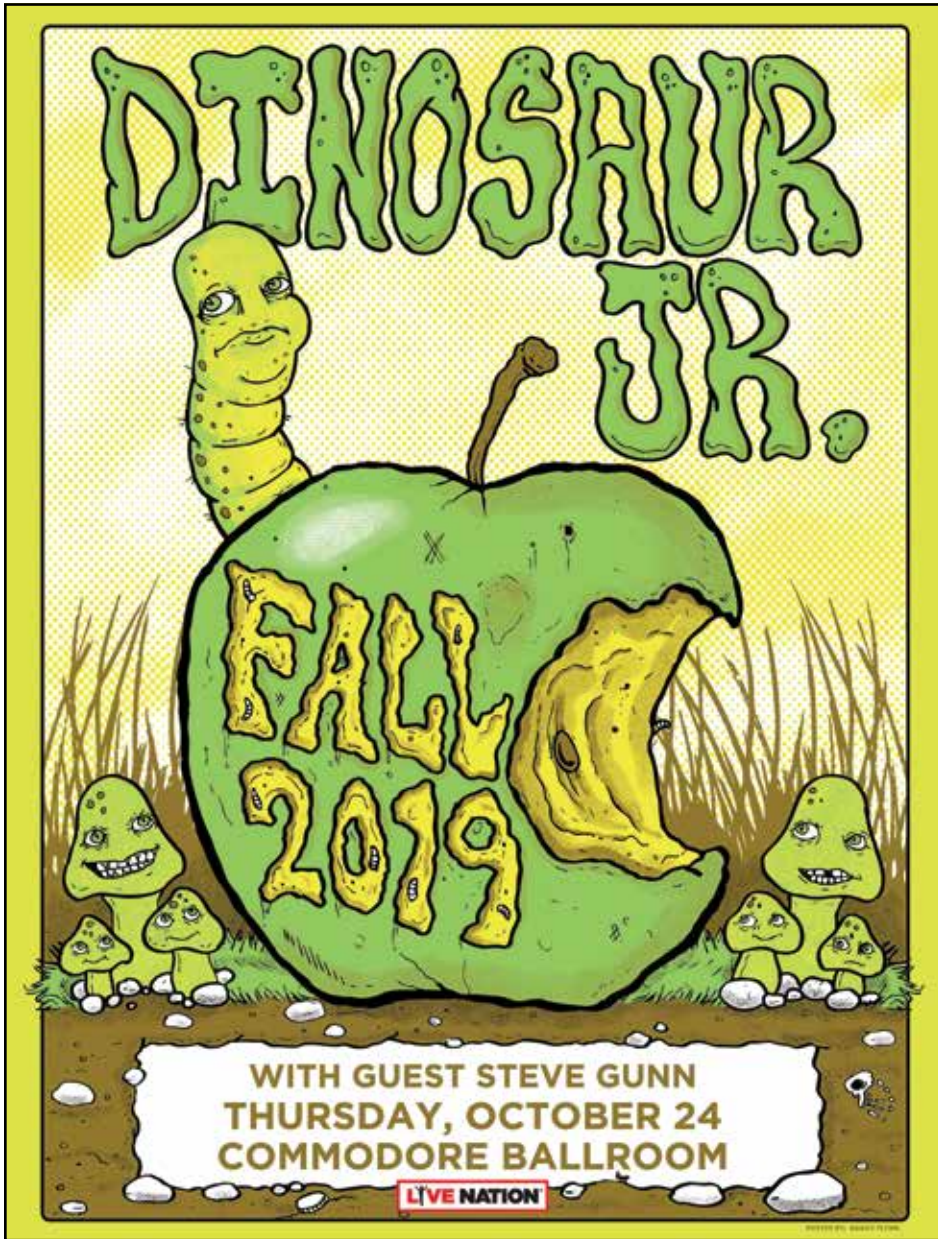
AU: You'll be coming back to Canada soon? We just fully legalized marijuana coast to coast.

RW: That helps a lot.

PH: As long as it can keep people from fucking using heroin, then I'm in, 'cause Canada definitely has their share of fucking crazy heroin users.

AU: Tell us about the Richmond, Virginia connection. You've got the Lamb of God and GWAR that brought you guys out on your first tour, if I'm not mistaken.

PH: It wasn't like the first tour, but it was definitely the first tour of that kind of level. GWAR definitely hooked it up and sort of showed us the ropes, in a weird way. But yeah Lamb of God are Richmond boys, and we bump into them every now and then.



Interview with vocalist Tony Foresta

AU: Where are we? Who are you? What's happening?

Tony Foresta: My name is Tony Foresta. We're at Hellfest and what I do, I like to hang out with my friends, travel the land.

AU: Tell us about the crazy sprint to make it to the show today.

TF: We had a show in Denmark last night, and this morning we had to be at the airport at 4am and take two flights to get here and we barely made it, like our van backed up onto the stage five minutes before we played and it was one of the funniest shows we ever played.

AU: Describe the crowd today.

TF: A lot of confusion because we sounded weird because we literally did not sound check at all, but there was a lot of energy and fun. You know when you're terrified about playing a set and having your shit together and then you see an audience having such a good reaction. It really



just made everything, like all the fucking stress in the world that you have, it's like a slap in the face that makes you love playing music. They don't care if you sounds like shit, they don't care if you're tired, they don't care if your voice is shot. They're there 'cause they know you love it and you're giving it your all.

AU: Have you tried the Hellfest wine?

TF: Actually I did, it's delicious.

AU: There's vineyards, all the metalheads piss on it to make it grow.

TF: That doesn't shock me at all. It's delicious.

AU: So Graspop one day, then Copenhagen, then Hellfest?

TF: Yeah we did Graspop in Belgium on Friday, then Copenhell in Denmark on Saturday and here on Sunday.

AU: Whoa, that's a weekend!

TF: We're tired. But I'm still high on this



adrenaline rush of energy and positivity. I'd like to be in bed, but *Slayer* is playing.

AU: Yeah King Diamond and Slayer tonight! Manowar cancelled, do you know anything about this?

TF: I heard some rumours.

AU: Tell me the rumours! I'm just shellshocked. We came over from Canada for them!

TF: I think here in France there is this weird sound curfew. I think when they showed up here they were told to be quiet. Of course they have



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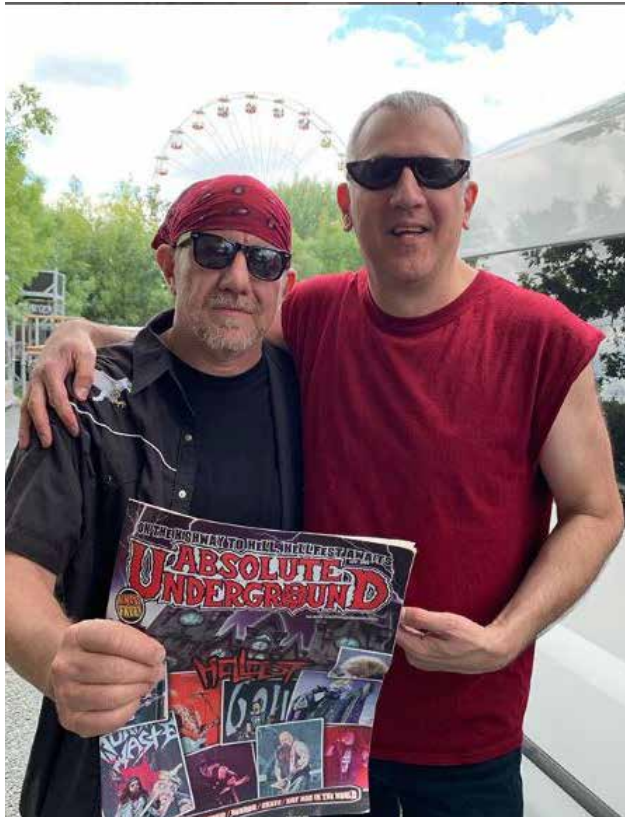
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The Dwarves

Interview with drummer Hunter Down
By Ira Hunter

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most infamous for?

Hunter Down: This is Hunter Down from The Dwarves. We're at Hellfest and I'm infamous for tearing up the drums.

AU: How was the Hellfest show?

HD: It was awesome. People were going nuts, it's a nice big crowd. People carrying flags and running

around. It's one of those bad ass festivals.

AU: What kind of tour is this?

HD: Just a quick ten-day run. Dwarves finish up in Athens, Greece tomorrow. I've actually been out here for a month playing with my band Decent Criminal.

AU: What's Decent Criminal all about?

HD: We're like a 90s alternative rock and roll type band. Just lots of good harmonies, good song-writing.

AU: The Dwarves will be playing Rebellion Fest this summer, too?

HD: Yeah, we'll be there. I think we're headlining one of the stages there. It'll be fun.

AU: What albums are you on?

HD: Just *Take Back The Night*.

AU: Describe the singer Blag's Tinder profile?

HD: It's just a picture of his cock. Girls seem to like it a lot, he gets a lot of tail.

AU: Final words for Canadian Dwarves fans?

HD: Be ready when The Dwarves come, because we're going to hit it hard. We'll be up there soon.

Interview with guitarist The Fresh Prince of Darkness and vocalist Blag Dahlia

AU: Who are we talking to?

Marc Diamond: The Fresh Prince of Darkness. The Dwarves, I play guitar. I've made vocational errors but the Dwarves is the best rock and roll band in the world so I am happy to be here. I've been in this band a long time.

AU: Do you enjoy playing Hellfest?

MD: Yeah, Hellfest is cool. We did Hellfest about 10 years ago. We went on before Iggy Pop, it was great. People here are really nice, we had a great show today. We like Hellfest.

AU: Blag didn't crowd surf today. Last time he did.

MD: You're right, last time he did. You know, you get older, it's harder to get out there, man. They have these big stages and barricades. We're not quite as spry as we were in our 20s, and making that jump can be kinda tough.

AU: Describe the scene of Hellfest.

MD: Slayer and Kiss are playing. It's fun. In America, everything is in a really tight box. If it's a punk festival, there has to be 100 punk bands that all sound the same. If it's a metal festival, it has to be a million metal bands. The thing that's kind of fun at a place like Hellfest is that it's a metal fest, but the put punk bands on, too. They get it. In America it has to be all punk, or all metal. They can't think outside of the box. That's why we like coming to Europe, people think outside of the box.



AU: That's why I like Hellfest. It's so diverse. I can't sit there through 70 death metal bands. Who else is on this punk stage today?

MD: Sum 41, The Descendents, Hank von Hell from Turbonegro, The Interrupters. .

AU: What Dwarves albums are you on?

MD: I'm on everything from *Come Clean* on.

AU: Blag, what the hell is going on?

Blag Dahlia: This is Blag and we're at Hellfest in Clisson, France and I will tell you what, we are and always have been the greatest rock and roll band of all time. Representing *Absolute Underground*, Canada's finest, crushin' shit is The Motherfucking Dwarves. Representing San Francisco, Chicago, Los Angeles and all points in between.

AU: Describe the ambiance here at Hellfest?

Blag: The ambiance. That's a good French word, man. It's beautiful here. They start rocking out early, which is good for us and they just don't stop. There is a lot of fucking action here. There is a lot of fucking madness. Hellfest is happening.

AU: Is the ferris wheel French? There's one behind you?

Blag: I feel romantic. Do you want to go up there? We can make out for a while.

AU: Describe the circle pit with the people in crazy costumes.

Blag: I like people moshing. It was fucking fun.

AU: Final words for Canadian fans?

Blag: My name is Blag the Ripper, biggest dick in show business and I'm coming back to Canada to fuck your mom.

www.thedwarves.com



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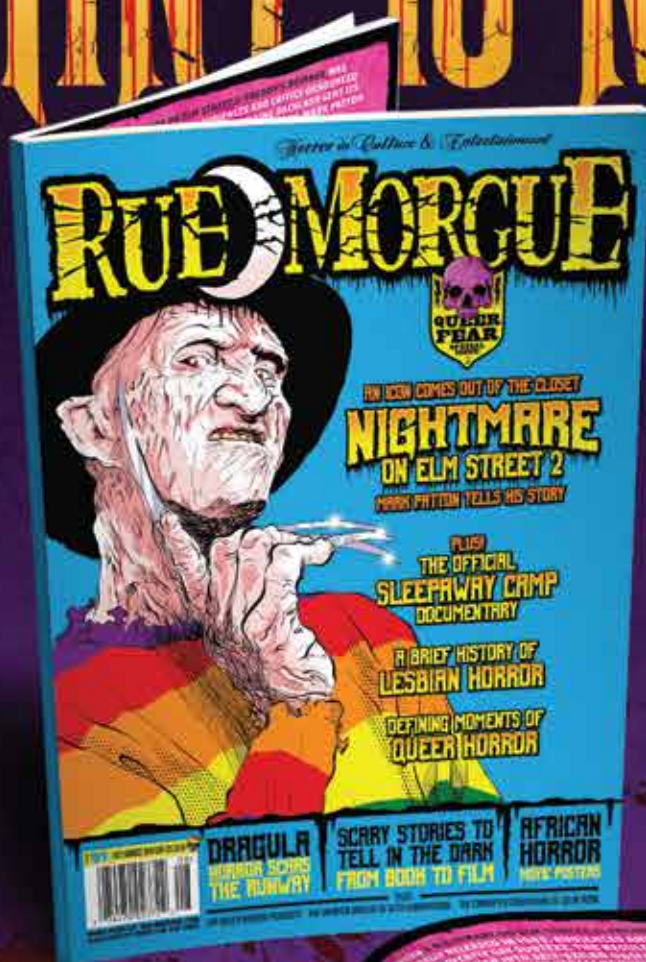
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Rebellion Festival Blackpool, England

By Jason Lamb

I think the moment that summed up Rebellion Fest for me this year was when I was chatting with Ray from Teenage

Bottlerocket, when Lee Ving of FEAR strolled by. Ray got excited and called Lee over to get a picture with him. Mr. Ving had a giant smile on his face and exclaimed, 'Holy shit! This is punk rock heaven!'

That is what Rebellion feels like. 300+ bands over four days, all housed inside the massive Winter Gardens in Blackpool, UK. Inside the Gardens are seven different venues, ranging in size. There is the Rebellion Introducing Stage, where up-and-coming bands can strut

their stuff in an intimate setting, to the huge Empress Ballroom, where the headliners play. The venue itself is an historic place... the Rolling Stones, The Who, Sex Pistols and hundreds more have graced the stage over the decades.

Highlights for me this year included Flipper, who now have David Yow of Jesus Lizard on vocals, and for their UK tour they brought along the legendary Mike Watt on bass. Yow is one of the best front men in music and their



performance bordered on a religious experience.

Cock Sparrer headlined the Saturday night to a very packed and very hot ballroom - I've never heard a louder sing-along crowd in my life.

Other performances that stood out for me were Dr. Know, Poison Idea, a hilarious UK band called Hung Like Hanratty, Cockney Rejects, 999, Bar Stool Preachers, Resistance 77 and The Exploited.

It's hard to pick favourites, as the whole weekend seems like



only spoke for a quick moment over a beer or smoke. The town of Blackpool embraces the festival big time, too. Anarchy flags and 'Welcome Punks' signs adorn many of the shop windows.

If you are a punk rock fan, especially if you love the original UK bands, you need to make the pilgrimage to Rebellion to see and experience it for yourself. There is nothing else like it anywhere.

Punk rock heaven. Lee Ving said it, so you know it's true.

www.rebellionfestivals.com

a crazy blur sometimes, as I tried to navigate the schedule to see as many bands as I could. What's really nice is the fact that they don't do the 'no ins and outs' bullshit that we see at every festival in North America. So you can skip out for a quick rest or bite to eat or to get a proper pint at one of the many pubs in Blackpool.

But beyond the music is the incredible feeling of community and unity you feel at Rebellion. I was blown away by how many of the amazing UK friends I made last year remembered me, even if we





CJ Ramone

Interview by Ira “Cretin Hop” Hunter and Jason “We Want The Air Waves” Lamb

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking with and what are you most infamous for?

CJ Ramone: CJ Ramone. We are at Rebellion festival in Blackpool, England. I’m infamous for being the bass player for the Ramones, replacing Dee Dee Ramone.

AU: How did you become the chosen one?

CJ: I just went to an open audition the Ramones held at SIR studios on 25th Street in Manhattan, and got very lucky. A friend of mine who knew a guy who played in a band with Joey’s brother Mickey called me up and told me about the audition. I’ve heard numbers anywhere from 40 to 75 people auditioned but I got the nod from

Johnny.

AU: Were you in other bands before that?

CJ: Yeah, but I lived on Long Island, and there really wasn’t a punk scene. But I grew up in the heavy metal scene playing bass. From when I was young I was really into metal, but punk just kind of came naturally to me. I ain’t never played with a pick before I played in the Ramones also, which made it a little more difficult.

AU: Have you played Rebellion Festival before?

CJ: I played Rebellion Fest two years ago. I love it here. It was really a treat to play it. In general we don’t get asked onto a lot of festivals. And it was the first really big festival I ever played and we had a really great time.

AU: What do you think that you brought to the Ramones when you joined other than your youthfulness?

CJ: Most of the stuff I took over was more like the grunt work. Like when it came to recording

records, I would learn all the songs. Joey didn’t come to rehearsals so I had to learn all the vocal lines and all the lyrics, then teach Johnny the songs. But on stage I was so out of my mind being in the band and I think what I brought to them live probably was more important than anything else.

AU: Is it true that you were sneaking Dee Dee Ramone songs in, sort of funnelling them through?

CJ: I tried to get them to play as much of Dee Dee stuff as I could. Dee Dee was always my favourite in the band. I loved all the stuff that he did. Especially like “Eat That Rat,” “Love Kills,” “Endless Vacation,” and “Wart Hog.” Dee Dee only sings the bridge part but I actually got them to do “Outsider,” which they hadn’t done in years and years. So yeah, I was a hardcore Dee Dee fan.

AU: What about your solo stuff?

CJ: I’ve got four albums out. Three on Fat Wreck Chords and one self release. I always include a bunch of my own stuff in the set but when people come to a CJ Ramone show they want to hear Ramones stuff so I always make it about 50/50 sometimes 60/40 on the Ramones side. I still love playing it, it’s still a lot of fun and people really get off on seeing and hearing it live. The thing is towards the end of the band, the closer we got to retirement the more breaks Joey needed in the set. So I sang more and more songs towards the end and I think that kind of opened the door for me to be able to do it post Ramones because everyone was used to seeing me sing.

AU: Do you have any favourite Ramones tribute bands?

CJ: Yeah, the Ramoms, the Ramonas, there’s a whole bunch of them. It’s like the Ramones are



the band that just won’t go away. It just shows you how great and timeless their stuff is. People still now consider it to be highly influential and still relevant to what’s going on now and that’s a really huge accomplishment. The Ramones kind of have reached that icon status, like Elvis, Marilyn Monroe, and James Dean. And it’s funny because that’s kind of where the Ramones made it to on their own without radio play, without MTV, with almost no support. They are the original DIY band and it’s just amazing they went from a band that toured in a van their entire careers to this hugely iconic status.

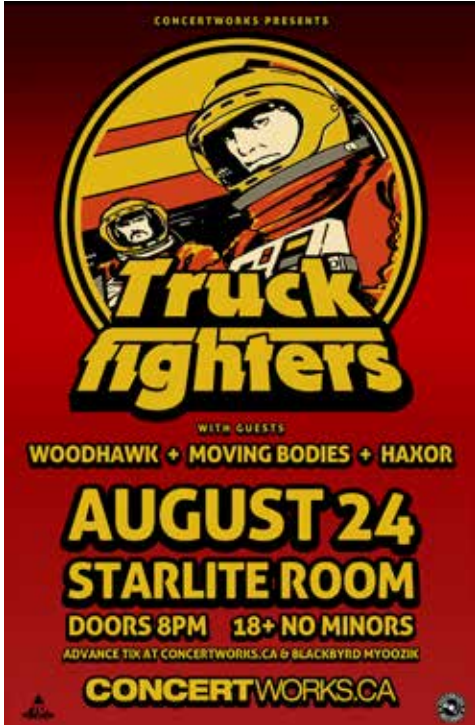
AU: Where were you when punk was exploding?

CJ: I was in New York. I’m originally from Queens but I lived on Long Island. So ‘76 ‘77 I was 13 or 14 years old.

I was lucky enough to hear about the Ramones early on because being from Queens I had all these cousins. Long Island was real redneck country but the Ramones, even out there, were like that odd crossover band where the metal crowd liked them, the hardcore crowd liked them, and the punks liked them. They crossover between all different groups of fans and it’s something you don’t really see a lot of now.

AU: Final words for Canadian fans of punk rock?

CJ: Ramones Forever!
cjrmones.com



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Cockney Rejects

Interview with singer Jeff Turner

By Ira "Headbanger" Hunter and Jason "I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles" Lamb

Please read the following interview answers in a Cockney accent.

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most infamous for?

Jeff Turner: You're talking to Jeff Turner from Cockney Rejects. Probably most infamous for the fact we started street punk years ago, and for the violence that was inflicted on the scene. We was the first football band, and the first Oi! band. I regret a lot of things that we done, it was 50 percent our fault, 50 percent other peoples'. I'm not going to cry about that. But we come through all the hard times and we blazed a trail for others. It's just unfortunately I've got a load of scars on me face and a load of arrests over it but I'm still here and living to tell so I'm happy.

AU: Is it true The Cockney Rejects are credited with coming up with the term Oi! to describe

it's style of music.

JT: What happened is in 1980 one of the music papers had done a review of a show of ours in Leeds and they really slagged us off and said the only three words the singer could muster between songs was "Oi! Oi! Oi!"

Oi!," so we done a song called "Oi! Oi! Oi!" and it was taking the piss out of that. Then all the kids from the back streets were the new punk then all of a sudden an Oi! movement grew out of it. Then Garry Bushell done the Oi! album in 1980 for Sounds and that had Cock Sparrer, The Exploited, The Upstarts, and The 4-Skins on it.

AU: Tell us the inspiration for calling your first album Greatest Hits Vol. 1.

JT: We had the concept cause we was arrogant bastards. For a laugh we said, well we've not had a hit record so we'll call it *Greatest Hits Volume 1* and see how that goes down, and it was good. Then we felt *Greatest Hits Vol. II*, *Greatest Hits Vol. III* then we got sacked by the record company and then I was signing on for the fucking dole after that. The first

album, I like to think stands up on its own without being in the charts.

AU: You still seem to have a lot of energy on stage.

JT: That's what it's all about. I train hard. I work hard for what I do. I'm 55. If you're up there and you're just going through the motions and people

have paid money to see you, it don't matter if it's 50 people, five thousand or five hundred, you give them a show and that's part of the Rejects show.

AU: Tell us about the book you wrote.

JT: *Cockney Reject*, yeah that came out in 2005. I was offered a chance to write the book and I just thought yeah I'll tell the truth as hard as it might be and I tried to put a humorous side to it but not absolve yourself from any blame.

AU: The guitarist just wrote a book too?

JT: Yeah, Mick my brother has wrote a book, it's just come out. It's about life after Tony that was in the band, a great man. Sadly he died four years ago.

AU: A lot of bands that have brothers in the band have major tensions.

JT: Me and my brother we live unconventional really as brothers. He's three years older than me. We boxed together for years. When we come out of the boxing scene into the music game now. The Rejects formed in March 1979 but it wasn't really a band. By October 1979 we'd only played four gigs and we'd signed with EMI, probably the biggest record company in the world at the time, it's a mad story. Now coming from humble origins me and my brother lived through the violent times, the nickings, the riots at the gigs, lived in each other's pockets, comen coming in as managers, people that were within the bands circle that were no good, the pressures of being ripped off and all that, so you usually turn on the one who you love most. Me and my brother we're always butting heads but we'll always have each others' backs.

AU: Describe Rebellion Festival.

JT: Rebellion's great! A lot of top class bands but you can also go to the Introducing Stage and see



new bands. I do a lot every year trying to put Brazilian bands on there. I love to see them get their chance. For them it's the biggest thing that's happened in their life. I love to help new bands if I can to get them on Rebellion and it's a great thing, long may it last. I just hope there's a lot of young bands coming through that can keep it going cause old bastards like ourselves and Cock Sparrer and all that, we aren't going to be around that much longer you know?

AU: What was it like when punk first began?

JT: Ah mate, I'll tell you what, to grow up in London when punk broke. Around 1977, I first heard The Pistols someone played me "God Save the Queen." I just thought this is brilliant. To actually play in England when punk was breaking was an absolutely fantastic thing. It was a real big movement. You could go in London, to the Vortex, the 100 Club, the Lyceum, Hammersmith Odeon, there was all sorts of venues and you could see a top notch band any night of the week. The Ramones, The Damned, The Rezillos, The Lurkers, 999, Devo all these great bands, all linked with the punk thing and it was a fantastic time to be around.

www.cockneyrejects.com



Q&A with guitarist Mick Geggus

Absolute Underground: In 2012 the band released a documentary film called East End Babylon. Was making the film something you enjoyed, and did you have to pinch yourself at times to say did you really do that?

Mick Geggus: Thanks to Richard England, it was his idea to make it and he saw it through. Everything in the movie was as honest as humanly possible. I'm very proud of it. I think it tells it as it is, and how it was. I think everyone comes across really well in it. We didn't want to do the typical movie,



you know someone sitting in a studio with a guitar saying, "Oh I remember back in the day..." We wanted real people, real faces of people that were there at the time. We kept it real.

AU: What's coming next for you and the band? Any more books?

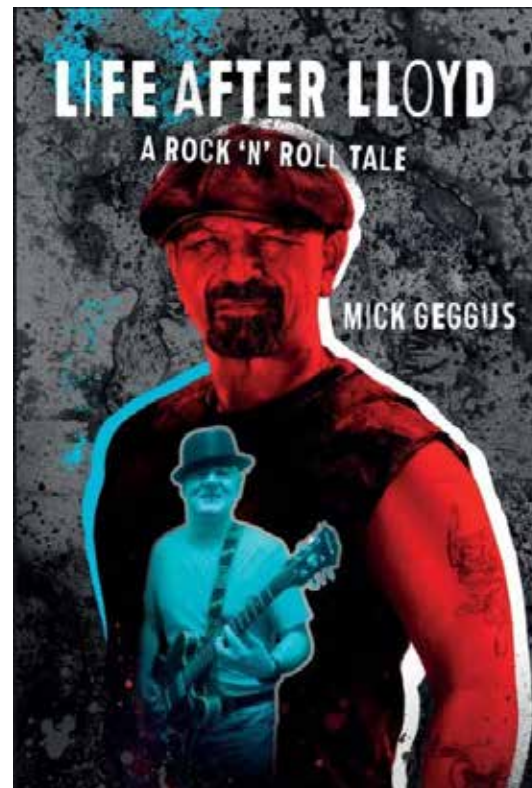
MG: I'm going to write another book, I've decided I like to write books. I'm going to get away from the music genre and try something completely different. As for gigs we've got Australia and New Zealand, Japan and Hong Kong, and various other places. In December we'll be performing *Greatest Hits Vol 1 & Vol 2*, live in their entirety at O2 Academy in Islington for one time only. So lots of fucking rehearsals to get through.

AU: Any new material coming out?

MG: There will be a single up for free download and a video called *40 Years Undeclared*, it'll be online within about a month.

AU: What was the metal band you were asked to join in the 80s and why didn't you join?

MG: What happened was after Randy Rhoads died I got a phone call from certain people asking me to audition and I declined. I was with



the Rejects. So that's what it was, when Randy Rhoads died, Ozzy's guitarist, I was asked to audition, but I said no. It weren't for me, as great as a man as he was, as great as a band as it was, I was with these boys, so that was it.

To purchase a signed copy of Mick's book, *Life After Lloyd – A Rock 'N' Roll Tale*, go to www.viveleshop.com www.cockneyrejects.com





999

Interview with singer Nick Cash
By Ira "Hollywood" Hunter and
Jason "Homicide" Lamb

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking with?

Nick Cash: This is Nick Cash from 999. You guys are from Canada? We've done that run so many times. We'd start off in Toronto and we'd drive to Calgary then go to Vancouver. We were loved over there and I guess we still are. We'd play The Edge, a club in Toronto. All the bands played there Ultravox, The Police, Johnny Thunders. We all did it in the early days of punk rock in the late 70s, 80s, and it was a very good scene over in Canada. The music travelled, the people wanted it. We also played over there with The Dickies.

AU: Is it true that back in the day 999 was responsible for carving out some tour routes down through the States?

NC: Yeah we did, we were the pioneers of it. We went out there with the FBI agency (Frontier Booking International) which was Ian Copeland who did like The Police, Ultravox, XTC, Black Flag, Circle Jerks, you name it. It was the first time that punk from both the States and England was getting together and going on the road. We were all playing the same gigs. It broke through big time, they said it wouldn't but it did. And here we are today. It's a terrible shame in the States and Canada that there are so many restrictions for touring bands. Artists who don't make so much money should be allowed to come over and work through culture exchange of music. I think it's very important to open that up again. Without 999 there wouldn't be Green Day, I don't want to boast, but it set the music free to do great things over there.

AU: My son loves your song "Inside Out."

NC: It's written about living on the streets of London. It's been used on the *Shameless* TV program. They used it because it kind of fits with the show. All those guys that liked 999, when they were skateboarders and would dive off the stage, now they've become film producers and they're using the 999 stuff in the films like *Too Old To Die Young* on Amazon Prime.

AU: Tell us the history between 999 and Rebellion Festival.

NC: Well we played the first ever one which was done in the East End by a guy who had the courage to put on The Exploited, The Damned all in one festival. But he did it, and it was a huge success. Then we kind of stuck with him and it went from



there. Then it kind of grew and grew. There's a universal language of music, clothes and dress that this punk, new wave thing started that is never going to go away.

AU: Let's talk about the new 999 album you're working on.

NC: The album's got the potential title of *Bish Bash Bosh*. It's got some very unusual songs on it. It's very hard hitting and thinks differently. It comes from different rhythms and is extremely hard hitting with melodies. We did that way back with songs like "Emergency" and "Homicide," they'd say you can't write a song about homicide, but we just did it. So it's kind of going to be like that again. The album is all finished so watch out for us coming out on Cleopatra Records.

AU: Is the song "Homicide" about a specific incident?

NC: No, I read a lot of things like Raymond Chandler novels and thought it would be great to write a song like that. So it conjures up a lot of images. It's a bit more hard hitting. The BBC said, "You can't play that song," so I said, "What's the matter with you? You're playing Kojak! About homicide in the Bronx." How can you censor somebody just telling a story in words. I've just written a song called "The Pit and the Pentagon." Which talks about some of the things the Pentagon does. There's a little band that I was in, I think the first ever punk band, we called it The Pentagon, I'm talking back in the 60s. People said you can't call it that, it's irreverent to the Pentagon, I said fuck the Pentagon, they're killing people, why not talk about the things that mean something to you.

AU: What was your very first introduction to punk?

NC: I was very lucky, I was part of a band called Kilburn and the High Roads with Ian Dury. Well we did a band before that, a pub rock thing. All the Sex Pistols used to come see the band, Malcolm McLaren used to make our clothes. So we were kind of there, right early on.

AU: Final words for fans of punk?

NC: LONG LIVE THE MUSIC!

www.nineninenine.net



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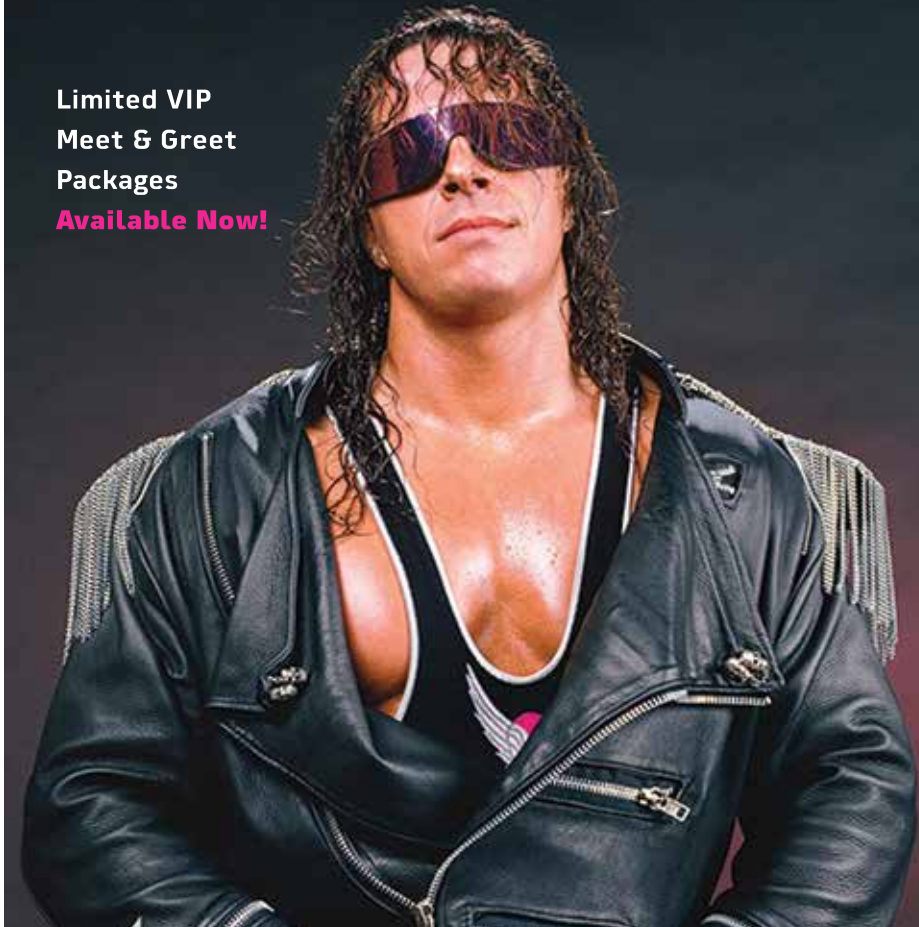
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U.K. SUBS

Interview with Charlie Harper
(Vocals)

By Ira "Limo Life" Hunter and Jason
"I Live in a Car" Lamb

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking with?

CH: Charlie Harper. U.K. Subs.

AU: Has U.K. Subs played every single Rebellion Fest?

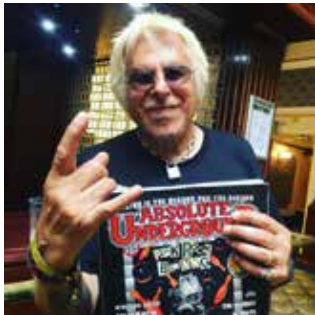
CH: No, we missed out one. But I still came up and sold shirts outside of the building. That was in the very early days when Rebellion was called Wasted Festival or Holidays in the Sun.

AU: Tell us the the origins of the band.

CH: The origins of the band comes from a club



called Shaggeramas in London. It was a lesbian club and every Friday they had bands on. So a few of us would go down there, they let guys in to fill the bar and pay for the bands. Pubs used to close at 11 o'clock, and we used to always find a watering hole opening until three o'clock in the morning or later. So we found Shaggeramas. We



hadn't been down there for a few weeks and when we went back there again it had became The Roxy. It had all changed and there was lads outside wearing leather jackets with spiky hair. So I was like "This is good," and they had bands on every night so we were well pleased with that. I was playing in a kind of rock and roll R&B band, I was already 30 years old and my band

were teenagers and I said, "Look, you've got to come up and see these bands. This is a future of rock and roll." Eventually they came down to The Roxy with me and they were just blown away, I think The Damned were playing that night. My

old for that." So they became a punk rock band. Later on I shared a flat with another guy and he said, "I've met this guy at a party, he's a guitarist who has come down from Leicester and wants to join a band and I told him about you." So the guy came round on Monday and it was Nicky Garratt and the rest is history.

AU: How old are you these days?

CH: I'm 19 when I get on stage. Otherwise I'm 75 and I'm late for me old peoples' home.

AU: What is your message about punk rock?

CH: Play it loud! Put the guitars up to at least four or five. Make sure the guitars are real, real loud. That's the secret. All the loud bands through history, the Stones had the loudest drummer, Charlie Watts. The Beatles were the loudest of course because they went to Hamburg where the crowd would say, "Turn it up! Turn it up!" The Who, Pink Floyd, all those bands were really, really loud. Just turn the fucking amp up. Kill it!

AU: Describe Rebellion Festival.

CH: It's the best festival in whole wide world. Yeah, if you've got any thoughts of coming over, it's brilliant!

AU: Is there gonna be a new U.K. Subs



band said then and there "We want to be a punk rock band." so I said, "Well you go and be a punk rock band. I'm an old blues man, I'm a bit too

album?

CH: Yeah. What we've done, is we've gone through the alphabet. So that's 26 albums. Now a company in the States has got us to do two covers albums. Plus there's a 40th anniversary album of *Another Kind of Blues* which we played last night. Next year is the anniversary of *Brand New Age*. But we all need time to do our own thing. Alvin's band, Alvin Gibbs & the Disobedient Servants is playing this weekend at Rebellion as well. Jamie's band "You" has just done a tour of Europe. I've done a couple solo acoustic albums. I'm also doing an electric one with Lars (Frederiksen), when we get time to do it.

AU: Any bands of note that opened for you that went on to become big?

CH: Do you know who supported us at CBGBs?



Back when they were called The Young and the Useless, then they turned into the Beastie Boys and got huge. Funnily enough I was the only one thought they were any good. Everyone else thought they were shit.

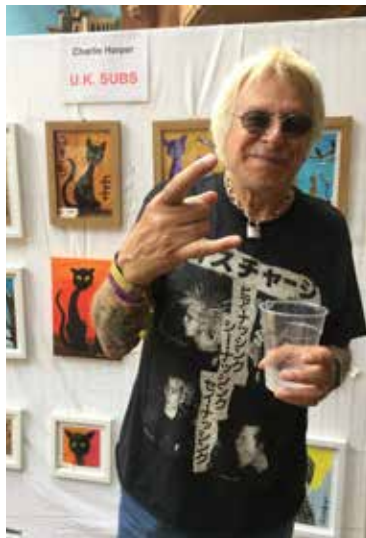
AU: You have some paintings on display at the Rebellion art show. I noticed you paint a lot of cats.

CH: Well I like this cat painter called Lewis Wayne and I thought I'll do a couple of cats one year. And I done the cats and they sold straight away and everyone was going, "Can you do some more cats?" so I've been doing more cats ever since.

AU: Any plans to tour Canada?

CH: We'll be over in Canada next year, so don't worry.

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Ruts DC

Interview with bassist John "Segs" Jennings

By Jason "Human Punk" Lamb

Absolute Underground: How many times have The Ruts played Rebellion?

Segs: I can't remember... I think six or seven, but I've lost count.

AU: Your last album *Music Must Destroy* is some of your best work ever - how does a band that's been around for 40 years manage to still produce such great music?

Segs: I think it's quality control. It's not like we've been together all those years though - we've all been doing other things. Malcolm died, as some of you may know, and we started Ruts DC. We made one album - *Animal Now* - and we made a double album and then it was time to stop it because the grief was sort of too much. So the period between that - I think that was '83 or something and *Music Must Destroy* was quite a long time. I was always into the reggae stuff - that's why we made *Rhythm Collision 2...* but writing anything that is rock or punk rock was very fucking difficult. But somebody said to me 'Just write what comes



out,' and I think what we did came out great. We're not under any illusion that it's better than The Crack, but people say it's a great album and that's all you can do really. The secret of it is, we had a little bit of a break and when the songs come, the songs come. Don't force it, don't let



hear more political statements from bands this weekend at Rebellion - the Ruts DC

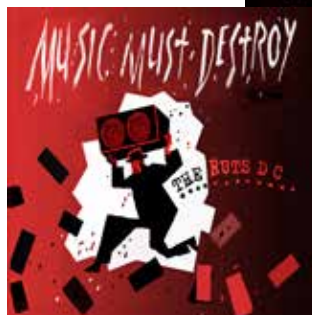
were one of the few bands that had something to say onstage.

Segs: Well we're looked upon as a political band, but I'm not political and we're not political. We're just for the good of the people. I've been following - sorry guys in Canada - Brexit and all this really fucking boring stuff, and I realize this is just a smokescreen really for what is really happening. While they were doing that, they passed all these other laws, about austerity, and other things. This is the way politics works. You guys don't have Donald Trump but you are very close to what's going on. We've just got idiots and charlatans in power. And I realized that we've

always had that - it's just the way they're portrayed. At least we know they're buffoons. But the thing is I realize that these guys don't represent me anyway, or probably most of the people who listen to our music. They don't represent us. So what you've got to do.... no anarchy.... autonomy. Autonomy is self-rule. Wake up in the morning and make sure you do the right thing and treat people good and try to write songs about good things. But I try to make it a bit more subtle now because I don't want to go there and point the finger. Everyone's heard that now in punk: 'You did this wrong and you did that wrong'... I want to say, 'Maybe



power, it's like church, right? Except without the bullshit. 'Burn down religion, but don't burn down faith of the filthy,' as one of my lyrics goes. If you



you're kind of doing that wrong and if you listen to us maybe we can change the world.'

AU: So do you consider yourself an optimist, then?

Segs: Hahaha!

Well, most of the time I'm a pessimist, really. But I'm optimistic tonight because when you do show, you get all this great feedback from the people. So let's learn from this - it's not about us being up there and them being out there. I could hear them and feel them singing along to our songs, and so if you can have that transference of

can take that and try to change the world, that's what we should be tuning into. And that's what you should be doing every morning when you wake up. Autonomy. I know meditation is a dirty word but actually if you look at it just like thinking on the good of the people and the good the planet. Yeah. Actually meditation works. So that's good. That's the way it is. I don't sit cross-legged because I can't do that any more, haha!

AU: But that's where the hope lies, right?

Segs: Yeah - that's a very good catch line man, you should be doing the weather! Yeah that's where the hope lies. I guess that's what we're surfing - we're surfing where the hope lies.

rutsdc.com



Cock Sparrer

Interview with Colin McFaul
(vocals)

By Ira "Spirit of '76" Hunter and
Jason "Out on an Island" Lamb



Absolute Underground: Who are we talking with, where are we, and what are you most famous for?

Colin McFaul: I'm Colin McFaul, the lead singer of Cock Sparrer here on day four of the Rebellion Festival in Blackpool, England. I'm famous for nothing apart from getting people to sweat in the Empress Ballroom last night.

AU: How was the show last night?

CM: There are times when we come off stage thinking that was really good and there are times you come off stage and I think well, we couldn't have done better than that. That was last night.

AU: I've never heard a louder sing-along.

CM: The problem can be, by the time you get to the third day of Rebellion, everybody's knackered. Everyone's tired, breathing through their ass. Last night it wasn't like that, everybody was up for it.

AU: Cock Sparrer pre-dates the Sex Pistols.

How have you maintained the band for so long?

CM: The thing to realize is that we were friends from school. So even in those times when we weren't out playing shows, we were still meeting up and going out for beers. We're friends first and a band second. We're all pointed in the same direction and have been since 16 years old.

AU: Is it true that Malcolm McLaren approached you guys first before the Sex Pistols and that you were supposed to be 'that band'?

CM: It was about the same time, he came to us with the view of having a different option to the Sex Pistols. We weren't the same as them. We played differently but we had an attitude he liked. He came to see us rehearse in a small pub in East London. He listened to three or four songs, sat down and started to talk to us. He had some guy with him in full punk regalia and the sex shop bondage trousers. And we were sitting there in our Doc Martens and jungle greens. The first thing we said to him was, "Well aren't you going to go get a beer before we go anywhere?" And he said, "No, I'm not going to buy you a beer." Well then... there's nothing to discuss is there? If this is the start of the relationship, then

forget it.

AU: What were your early influences?

CM: Bowie, Slade, T-Rex, Sweet. We just wanted to meet some girls really, we thought it might give us a shortcut, but naaah. I grew up with two older brothers who were heavily into Motown and Stax. The Four Tops, The Temptations. Plus bands like The Small Faces. Steve Marriott was my favorite singer. So it was a mixture of things.

AU: I don't wanna get heavy, but what are your thoughts about a small group of people who appropriated "England Belongs to Me" as a white nationalist anthem? Rebellion doesn't attract this type of thing, but you see it bubbling up more these days.

CM: What we had is a problem with people who wanted to come in and just fucking break

everything up and spoil the scene. We had years of doing gigs and that happening, and it became unsafe and unsavoury. We just sat down after one particularly hairy night and said look, one of us or one of our friends is going to get seriously hurt, and that will be our responsibility. So we took a step back, and took a break. Now the scene is much more self policing, it's a lot more positive. Those people have got older, they don't tend to come anymore. "England Belongs To Me" has been hijacked in the past and people have made it out to be something that it was never intended to be. It's about a sense of pride, it's about belonging, loving where you come from and there's nothing wrong with that as long as it's inclusive. Steve Burgess says we've got a song that took three minutes to write and 30 years to explain.

AU: What was it like coming and playing your first shows in America in 2000?

CM: It was brilliant. It was one of those things where we'd never done before. Over four days we played New York, Boston, L.A. and San Francisco and had a great time. Since then things have developed and moved on from there. We're going to do Riot Fest in Chicago. We looked at that line up and it goes from Slayer to the Village People, that's something that we don't mind being part of. And then Pirates Press 15th anniversary this year is on a fucking aircraft carrier, the USS Hornet, which was the ship that picked up the moon landing astronauts.

AU: Describe Rebellion?

CM: Rebellion is about community and family. It's the best festival of its kind, it's just different. There are no major sponsors, there's nothing corporate about it. It's organized and run by a family and by a team of people who love the scene.



AU: Any advice for new bands?

CM: Just keep working hard. Don't turn down any gigs, play for three people, it doesn't matter. Keep practising your art, keep learning the trade and you'll get there in the end.

AU: Where were you at the very beginning of punk?

CM: We were on tour with the Small Faces, I remember it vividly. I was in a hotel room in Liverpool and I heard "The Jams In The City" get played on Radio 1, and I thought, "Oooh, that's good." From then on, there was such a tidal wave of this punk thing happening. Every record company wanted to get a couple of punk bands. We never fitted with it, we refused to play by the "punk" rules. We weren't going to wear the bondage trousers, but we were true to ourselves. A lot of the stuff that we released, our first two singles which came out in July and November

of '77 were there before lots of those more famous records. All around us was just this whole groundswell of punk, then it just died. It reached a peak and became more about fashion and the look. But then people like Garry Bushell pushed forward this idea of let's take it back to the streets and make it real again. You can call it Street Punk or Oi! but we've never particularly felt the need for a label. We're just Cock Sparrer.

www.cocksparrer.co.uk



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The Business Event

Interview with Roi Pearce

Original members of The Business joined by Roi Pearce (Last Resort) and a selection of very special guests.

This is the ultimate tribute to Micky Fitz and The Business. Mick was a good friend to Rebellion and many people have been asking how we could honour his memory so when the original members decided to get back together for a one off show in Berlin, the demand to bring this home to the UK was overwhelming.

Raise a glass to Mr Fitz, as this is the perfect way to celebrate the life of Micky. This is a chance for the songs to get



Absolute Underground: What are you best known for?

Roi Pearce: Singing in Last Resort, I've played in the 4-Skins, and I've just done a the Business set for the tribute to Micky Fitz.

AU: What is The Last Resort all about?

RP: It's rock and roll with attitude, but we lived the shit. That was the difference.

AU: Explain what just happened with The Business event here at Rebellion.

RP: It was a tribute. It was four singers with three members of the original Business. JJ Kaos from Last Resort on bass. It was Sebi from Stomper 98 singing, me from The Last Resort, and Mike Brands from Arch Rivals.

AU: Did any other special guests pop up?

one last blast in places that were important to the band and for everyone to give Micky the send-off he deserved – by singing these classics at the top of their lungs. Loud and proud, a celebration, pure and simple.

We start with a brief description of who is in the band:

Steve Kent – Started the band with Micky in 1979 and wrote all of the early songs, re-joined for *Welcome To The Real World* and *Keep The Faith* albums

Steve Whale – Wrote and recorded on every studio album the band ever released

Micky Drummer – First album was *Saturdays Heroes* in 1985 and stayed with the band until their very last studio album (*No Mercy* – 2001)

RP: Beki Bondage from Vice Squad and Lee Wilson from Infa-Riot.

AU: How did you first discover punk?

RP: I was the right age at the right time when it was all going down. I was like 16 or 17 in 1977. So I was the right age and had the attitude. Punk was my first ever love, if you know what I'm saying? Going down to The Roxy and The Tramshed in Woolwich to see all the bands.

AU: Explain Rebellion to people that have never been?

RP: It's probably possibly the biggest punk festival in the world is twenty third year and it's amazing. Everyone's fantastic. Everyone gets on. Hundreds of bands. It's unbelievable. It was a really special night and a tribute to Micky, my dear friend. Back in the day, me and Micky, Last Resort and The Business we broke through together. So we always had that bond.

AU: Any other stories to share about Micky Fitz from the Business?

RP: Where do you start? Me and Micky go back for nearly 40 years. So I've had some great times. Micky had his ups and downs with his problems but I still loved him.

AU: Is this Business tribute event something that will only happen at Rebellion or is it something that could tour around?

RP: Well apparently we've been offered more concerts. We've got one in November in Madrid. So we will see what's going to occur from this point. Originally it was only to be one or two gigs but people seem to be more interested so we're going to see if we can take it on the road a bit



further.

AU: What were your early influences?

RP: I went through all the stages, Sham 69, 999, all the great bands back in the day.

AU: Anything else to promote?



RP: Yeah, we've got a new album coming out at the end of the year.

AU: Has The Last Resort ever played in Canada?

RP: Yeah, we was over there about 18 months ago. We played in Montreal and Toronto.

AU: Final words final words for Canadian fans?


RP: We'd love to come back. We had a fantastic time. Hopefully we'll see you in the future.

www.facebook.com/thelastresortuk

www.facebook.com/TheBusinessOi

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Rebellion Festival

Terminal Heads

Interview with guitarist John Sawyer

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to?

JS: My name's John. I'm the guitarist in Terminal Heads. We've been going since about '88, we're a bit late to the party at Rebellion. They never invited us before now but this year we're here with a vengeance.

AU: Where are you from?

JS: We're from Kent. Gravesend. Down south, bottom right hand corner of the country.

AU: How was playing Rebellion this weekend?

JS: We played early on Thursday. We were on at quarter to one in afternoon so we were the

second band on the Arena Stage. You think, oh shit, we're on really early but this is such a great place. It was mobbed, everyone turns out from the minute it starts.

AU: What were your early influences?

JS: Personally, I love the Ruts. They're the people that made me wanna jump up and down on my bed playing guitar instead of pissing around with a tennis racket. I was a bit young for the very first wave of punk, but the Ruts, love them. But my favourite band of all time and biggest influence is NoMeansNo.



AU: Have you checked out their new project, it's a band of robots, Compressorhead.

JS: Yeah, John Wright, he's done the drum stuff and he's now running a brew pub up in Powell River.

AU: Describe Rebellion Fest for people.

JS: I can remember being 12 years old, it must have been '79 and my two older brothers took me up to Chelsea, Kings Road where all the punks used to go and pose outside Malcolm McLaren's shop. I can remember being blown away by seeing all these weird and wonderful punk rockers. But this festival is more than that. On the Wednesday, the night before the festival, you walk around Blackpool and there's 50 odd punks outside every pub, and full inside and I got that same feeling. You walk into a town and everyone is a punk. Everyone's catching up with old friends. Everyone's putting an arm around someone saying ah man I haven't seen you for ages. That's what Rebellion is all about.

It's about meeting someone from the other side of the world that you share a common interest with. It's the heart and soul. It's fucking punk rock mate! Sorry, I got a bit excited there.

AU: You'd also like Punk Rock Bowling.

JS: And there's a big one out in Slovenia, The Punk Rock Holiday.

AU: How would you



describe your sound?

JS: We're pretty much straight out of UK82, blood and guts, lots of passion, lots of noise. And I think we kick shit. Check us out.

AU: Who are some of the bands Terminal Heads has played with in the past?

JS: NoMeansNo, Hanson Brothers, Subhumans, U.K. Subs, The Lurkers, Vibrators, all the old school punksters. We've played with all of the people that I grew up loving their music.

AU: Final words for Canadians?

JS: Go to Powell River and check out John Wright's bar. And check out Tom Holliston as well. What a star. Oh, and Terminal Heads, of course.

www.facebook.com/terminalheads



Rebellion Festival Resistance 77

Interview with lead guitarist Jonny March

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking with?

Jonny March: My name is Jonny and I'm the lead guitar player for Resistance 77. I'm very pissed right now, not pissed off, I'm pissed in like a friendly, happy, jolly alcohol-fuelled way.

AU: How was your set at Rebellion tonight?

JM: We're thrilled to be here. We've had some good feedback about our performance. Rebellion. We played songs that people

can sing along to.

AU: Any other touring plans?

JM: We're going to America to Crash Festival in Oakland, California. We've got a lot of new friends we've made out there and we hope to make even more.

AU: You think you'll come to Canada?

JM: We'd like to. We wouldn't rule that out. My grandmother was born in Canada. They were pioneers.

AU: Any other family members you want to mention?

JM: My great great uncle was actually the heavyweight bare knuckle boxing champion of England. His name was Ben Caunt, c-a-u-n-t, don't forget the a. And the bell in the Palace of Westminster, Big Ben was named after him. Big Ben. That's right. That's my great great great uncle. Yeah.

AU: Because he'd knock you out and you'd hear bells?

JM: My fuckin ancestors are bare knuckle boxing champions. So get that in your fucking magazine.

AU: Explain what Resistance 77 is all about.

JM: We're about unity. We're about sticking together. We're about drink, drugs, friendship, family. All the good stuff, really.

AU: Can you describe your live show? There's a lot of jumping around by the singer I noticed.

JM: Oddy is in his late 50s and he jumps higher than any guy I know. He is very physically fit. He does boxing training, he gets very excited and he forgets the words and jumps up and down. We all love him to bits. He's got no hair so he looks a bit like Gollum from *Lord Of The Rings*. He's a good mate. I'm privileged to be a part of this band and the are lucky to have me too.

Because I'm fucking awesome.

AU: You just turned 50 and got married tell us more.

JM: Well yes, I turned 50 on Monday I got married the Saturday before that. So this Rebellion is my honeymoon, my stag night and my fiftieth birthday and I intend to get totally fucking shitfaced now I've done my job playing guitar.

AU: Describe Rebellion for people who haven't been here yet.

JM: It's the best fucking punk rock party in the world. Where else could you see Flipper, Fear, L.A.M.F., The Members, Vice Squad, U.K. Subs, Dragster, Resistance 77, all under one roof. Such a diverse mixture



of bands, all the genres are here.

AU: Anything else to promote?

JM: Yeah, we've just released a new single for download only at the

moment. It will follow on vinyl as an album track, "Punks Not Dead But I'm Not Far Off." We made the whole song up from song titles of classic English punk songs. The riff is "Your Generation" by Generation X. The solo is a mixture of Toy Dolls and fucking everything else.

AU: Final words for Canadian fans.

JM: Please welcome us to your country. We would love to come and tour. We want Dragster, Resistance 77, The Electric Shite Orchestra, which is another band I am in, on the bill.

AU: Do you like Rebellion or Punk Rock Bowling better?

JM: I like them both as much. They're very different. I don't really know why or how they're different but I love them both as much.

www.resistance77.com

www.facebook.com/groups/punksnotdeadbutimnotfaroff





a juggalo? Do you do the face painting?
Skinny Pete: I do the face painting. I've always been into it. ICP came over last year and there was a massive Juggalo turnout.
AU: Face painting is kind of rare in punk rock.
Skinny Pete: Yeah some older bands like The Adicts face paint but



BANDITS

interview with Starby (hype man), Spoonie (Guitar), Beachy (Drums), Castle (Wrestling), Skinny Pete (singer/juggalo)

AU: What's your band called?
Spoonie: Bandits UK.
AU: I see a big weed leaf and a skull on your back patch.
Starby: It's all about smoking weed and having fun. No politics.
AU:Are you in the band too?
Starby: Yeah man, I'm the buzz. I get the crowd going.
AU: You're the singer?
Starby: Second singer. Starby77 that's me. Check out my Youtube page Starby77.
Spoonie: I'm Spoonie, the guitarist.
Skinny Pete: This is Skinny Pete, singer. Reppin Up The RG. I'm also a Juggalo. Juggalo fam family. Woo Woo!
AU: Is your brand of punk influenced by being

nowadays there's not a lot of it.
AU:What's the band all about?
Spoonie: It's about smoking weed and having a lot of fun.
Starby: And dancing our arse off. That's all it's about, enjoy yourself. Too many bands to politics, fuck the politics.
Spoonie: It's not about the party you're having now it's about the party you're having later.
AU:Where are you guys from?
Spoonie: South of England, the Newbury/Reading area.

Starby: Skinny Pete is our lead singer. Boz on the bass. Mike on the guitar. Spoonie on the guitar. Beachy on the drums and me on the crowd, fucking loving it.
AU:What are the songs about?
Starby: Smoking weed and partying.
AU: How's Rebellion been treating you?
Starby: We played the Introducing Stage last year. We must have done something right to get invited back, considering we are a bunch of reprobates. So we played yesterday at half two on the Pavilion Stage. Fucking awesome set. I got to be a right cunt and make a tit of myself and stage dived. It was absolutely amazing. Thanks to Jonny Wah Wah and all the Rebellion crew.
Skinny Pete: Imagine Comic-Con but for punk. You're gonna see a lot of crazy shit, like crazy outfits, it's all colourful but there's no aggression anywhere similar to the Juggalo thing. Everyone's there for each other. It's all big family. I haven't seen any fights the whole weekend, no agro. Everyone's here to appreciate music, it's brilliant.
AU: Have Bandits done any other cool things?
Starby: You have to check James Castle, he's a local wrestler from down South. We wrote his entrance music, a song called Reject - Refuse - Resist.
Starby: This is Beachy our drummer.
Beachy: Oh hi, I play the drums in Bandits.
Starby: This is Castle the wrestler.
AU: They do your theme song?
Castle: They do indeed, yeah. They wrote it for me a year or two ago.
AU:What is the song about?
Castle: It is Reject Refuse Resist. The character that I play is the anarchist James Castle who is resisting the system. There is a few different companies I work for. The main one is Revolution Pro Wrestling.
AU: Tell me some of the names of your songs.
Starby: Too Close To Da Sun, Rowdy is our main



single, Reject – Refuse – Resist, we've got an EP.
Spoonie: Reppin Up the RG.
AU:What is the RG?
Spoonie: The RG is our post code, it's where we are all from, the Reading area.
AU: Can you guys describe Rebellion Fest?
Starby: The most fucking punk festival there has ever been. Biggest punk festival in the fucking world mate.
AU: I'm used to going to Punk Rock Bowling. This is a real different atmosphere.
Spoonie: You are in Blackpool, not Vegas.
Starby: We are a musical slap in the face. The first time people see us, they are like what the fuck was that? Afterwards they get used to us.
Spoonie: When we've got a lead singer talking about being a Juggalo and the Insane Clown Posse, you know you are in for a different kind of treat.
AU: Do you guys have a record out?
Starby: We do, we got an album Reppin Up the RG. We got an EP with Rowdy and Reject Refuse Resist. We are on Bad Granola Records. There is a lot of good bands on that shit. Give props to Andy from Bad Granola Records.
AU: Final words.
Beachy: Bandits! Best there is. Best there was. Best there ever will be.
banditsuk.bandcamp.com
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INFA RIOT

Interview with Lee Wilson (Vocals)
By Ira Hunter

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and where are we?

Lee Wilson: I sing in a lowly band called Infa Riot and we are standing outside the backstage door at Rebellion festival, the biggest punk festival in the world, in Blackpool, Northern England in Lancashire.

AU: What is Infa Riot all about and what were your influences?

LW: Well, we were punk fans. I mean everyone calls us an Oi! band, but you've got to remember, when we started, Oi! wasn't even invented. It was created at a later date by Garry Bushell. But we're a punk band, I still call us a punk band because that's what we are. We started in 1979 in North London, me and Barry, the guitarist. We only stayed together three years but we did the *Still Out Of Order* album that everyone remembers. So then we come back in 2011 after 28 years, that's when we started again.

AU: You just played Punk Rock Bowling and now Rebellion. You're on a good circuit.

LW: Yeah, we've done alright. South America. We've done America quite a lot. It's more organized now, like we do Europe a lot. Now you got EasyJet, The Channel Tunnel. It's fucking cheap before you needed visas and is was complicated but but now it's easy.

AU: How was your set at Rebellion this year?

LW: We were up against the Stranglers, which was a bit scary for us and we wondered if anyone would come and see us. But fortunately we got there in the end and it was nice and busy and we had a good show. It was rammed in there with people, so we did enjoy it.

AU: What does Infa-Riot mean?

LW: What it was, I got the name for the band, back then in the late 70s everyone was called The something. The Jam, The Clash, The Damned, so I didn't want a band name with The in it. I wanted something with Riot in it so I added Infa, it's a made up word really, but it works.

AU: What are some of your most well-known songs?

LW: We've got "Kids of the 80s," most of the songs we do are off the *Still Out Of Order* album. That was our first one and most successful one, really.

AU: Do you have anything new in the works?

LW: We released an album a couple of years ago called *Old and Angry*, so we did a couple off that tonight, "Kiss My Arse," and "Ya Can't Beat a Little Bit of Punk and Oi!," which went down quite well. It's all about the chorus, we write all our songs around the chorus, and I've never

written a song that you can't whistle.

AU: Who did you say invented Oi?

LW: Garry Bushell, he wrote for *Sounds* magazine. What it was, the original punk became a bit arty middle class with university blokes. So Infa-Riot, Cockney Rejects, 4-Skins, Last Resort, and The Blitz, Garry kinda grouped us all together and we were actually called The New Breed at that time



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but then suddenly Oi! came in. And the rest of Europe liked the idea of Oi! and it's evolved from there. But Infa-Riot is a strange band because we fit into the Oi! thing and with the UK 82 bands as well so we have a lot of Skinheads watch us but also quite a lot of Punk Rockers watch us. We're rare. Generally one goes for one and one goes for the other.

AU: Where were you when punk first happened?

LW: Well, like many things in life, when you're in the middle of it and doing it, you don't realize you're doing anything special or that it's going to last so long. And also what surprised me, when we come back in 2011, was how far the tentacles of punk music go. It's spread to Japan, Australia, America,



weekend.

LW: Yes, I'm doing backing vocals on Harry May.

AU: The singer who passed away, Micky Fitz, is going to be missed.

LW: I went to his funeral, it was bizarre. It was like a who's who of the punk world. Everyone was there.

AU: What do you consider your career highlight so far?

LW: My proudest moment was playing with Sham 69. I've always been a Sham 69 fan. I've always loved their songs. We went on before them and they were great to us. So that was a nice moment for me, personally.

www.facebook.com/infariot



amazing really.

AU: What bands did Infa-Riot play with back in the day?

LW: We did a gig once with The Business and Blitz, which would be a rare thing now. Infa-Riot did the first ever tour that The Business did in England. Not a lot of people know that.

AU: There's a tribute to The Business this

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The Phillips Backyard Weekender

Steel Pulse

Interview with Selwyn Brown

By I-ree

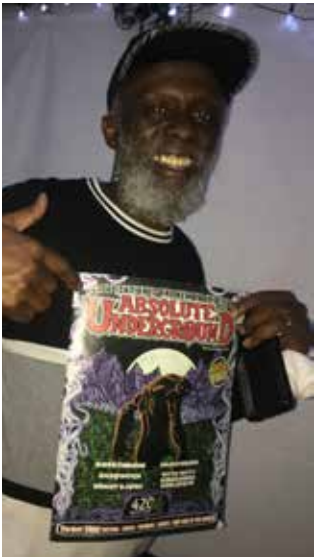
Absolute Underground: Who are we talking with?

SB: My name is Selwyn Brown I'm one of the founding members of Steel Pulse reggae band. We are in Victoria for The Phillips Backyard Weekender.

AU: Canada just legalized marijuana all across the country. Any thoughts on that?

SB: It is long overdue. Cannabis has got a whole heap of medicinal uses and properties. Just like honey, just like water, just like ginger. People have been using it for medicinal reasons for thousands of years. At least the powers that be have seen sense. I know that they did it because they see a way to make a profit but regardless of that, all these people that have been criminalized for years, won't be any more. So to me, it is one of the best things that's happened worldwide, culture-wise, social-wise for years.

AU: Tell me a brief history of the band.



SB: Well, the original band was formed in the UK in Birmingham, in Handsworth. The original band, we were all schoolmates. Myself and David are the only original members remaining. We formed the band just as a fun thing to do. People who started coming down to our rehearsals, our original fan

club was obviously family members, girlfriends, friends and they would say, "You guys sound alright. You should take this more seriously." So we did. We started to practice daily. When we started to learn to play music we played by ear. What we used to do was cover songs. Not just reggae, I remember us covering Eric Clapton's "Hand Jive," but obviously we covered Bob Marley songs and Burning Spear songs, anything that touched us. After a while we evolved our own sound because our favourite music was roots reggae music, music that was actually saying something for the people. So we thought if we could be a band that could be a voice for the people, that's what

we would like to do. So we integrated with the original punk rock movement in England. We were probably the first band to play on the punk rock circuit because all the reggae bands, including ourselves, were actually scared to play at a punk rock venue because of all the spitting involved. But we took a chance and it worked for us. So that helped us to crossover to the rock market and get our first album deal with Island Records in 1976. Our first album was *Handsworth Revolution*, our second was *Tribute to the Martyrs*, the third one was *Caught You*, in some places they call it *Reggae Fever*. We did three albums with Island



then we moved on to Elektra Records and others. We came to America for the first time in 1980-81. We went to Africa for the first time in 1982. We've built our audience from there to what it is now. We've just released our 14th or 15th album called *Mass Manipulation*.

AU: Was it the environment of Birmingham that influenced to make you more socially charged? There was a lot of punk and metal bands that came from there as well.

SB: Yeah, I'd say that because Birmingham and being in the North of England. We ended up being born in England because our parents came there from the Caribbean, particularly from Jamaica. They were invited to England by the English government to help build the country back up after the second World War, and some of the people stayed, including our parents. So that's how we ended up being born in Birmingham and raised in England. But being black people in England, we face a lot of racism as well, police brutality, police harassment. So yeah that did influence our writing so far as topics, things that we saw going

on we put that into our songs.

AU: Which punk bands did you play with when Steel Pulse first started?

SB: Sex Pistols, The Police, because even though they are not a punk band they were on the punk rock circuit, as well. Generation X, The Clash, XTC,

The Tom Robinson Band, and we ended up doing shows with Bob Geldof and people like this. That lead us to the whole rock circuit as well.

AU: Did your singer David Hinds invent the dreadlock mohawk?

SB: You could say that, yeah. Because he was the first person I saw with it

AU: Final words for Canadian fans

SB: Thank you very much all the fans in Canada for supporting us over all those years. We do appreciate your support from the bottom of our hearts. So thank you and carry on supporting not just us, but all the other reggae bands that are trying to say something.

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Maritime Metal Documentary

Interview by Roger The Shrubber

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking with and what are you most infamous for?

Billy Stever: This is Billy Stever, the Director and Creator of *Maritime Metal*, the documentary. Back in the late 2000s I was a promoter in Moncton, NB, and Halifax, NS, who brought in some big acts like Krisiun, Belphegor and Dying Fetus to the Maritimes for the first time.

AU: Tell us about *Maritime Metal*, how did the idea come about? How did the two producers start working together?

BS: In June 2018, I was vacationing in Sweden and came up with the idea. I wanted to do a video project as I'd been an amateur photographer for many years. I realized I had a lot of old tapes of shows I filmed and old backups of photos, posters, etc, taken in the Maritime Metal scene in the 2000s. Once I got back home in July, I set off researching the scene from the 90s until today to see if I could make a documentary of the scene. After a month or two of research, I presented the idea to my friend Dan Crowder, who has worked on many indie films. He thought it was a good idea and something he wanted to take part in even though he is from Ontario and was not part of the Maritime Metal scene like I was. He believed in my vision and dedication to the project and came aboard as a co-producer.

AU: Why Maritimes Metal? What is special about the scene there? You wrote on your site that you're focusing on the era from 1990 to 2010, what is special about this period?

BS: I think what's special about it is the fact not many metalheads outside of the Maritimes know of the scene. There have been a lot of talented musicians and bands over the years that should be known outside of the Maritimes. I think it's interesting to see the progress of the scene from the 1990s till now, from the days before the internet to the 2000s when most households started getting internet access. This really brought the scene together. There was a message board created for the scene, a website, and people could easily communicate and find like-minded people, not only in their own city, but also in small towns and cities all over the Maritimes. I believe this is something that a lot of people will identify with, even if they are not a metal fan. All music scenes changed with the changes in technology. For the Maritimes where everything is so spaced out geographically, this 'new' ability to communicate online was a huge turning point for the metal scene. It went from each city having a handful of bands in the 90s to an explosion of bands starting up in the 2000s.

AU: Tell us about some of the key players that will be featured in your documentary. What bands or musicians will you be focusing on and why?

BS: Some of the 90s bands I would like to cover are Earth A.D., Skinkeeper from Moncton, Holy Order from Fredericton, Lizard from Saint John, Tolerance from PEI, and Gorbage, Entrafis, Adrenalin, Dichotic, from Halifax. All these bands were instrumental within their cities in the 90s and they inspired the next wave of bands that

started up in the 2000s. There are so many bands to cover after this it's hard to say right now who will make it into the documentary. But most likely bands like Hellacaust, Terratomb, Cephalectomy, Gruesome Feast, Slaughter Of Saints, Dischord, to name a few. We will also cover some of the current scene like Dumpster Mummy, Hard Charger, Death Valley Driver, Zaum and whoever else we can interview in the two weeks we are in the Maritimes this June.

AU: Tell us a bit about the process behind the making of this documentary.

BS: As you can imagine there is a lot of work to do a full length documentary. On top of this, both Dan and myself are located in Montreal. We needed a few interviews to launch any type of crowdfunding campaign, so we did three interviews with five people in Montreal and Ottawa by November 2018. We caught Chris Lewis in Montreal when he was playing a show with Zaum, as well as two ex-members of Tolerance. Later, we traveled to Ottawa to interview two ex-members of Dichotic, also. Our first campaign ran for 40 days over the month of December and into the new year. We got a lot of exposure for it and did raise around \$2,500. We are very thankful it went as well as it did. We are currently in the middle of the second round of crowdfunding, with a new promo video I made featuring new interview footage we shot in Toronto with six ex-Maritimers. In June we will be in the Maritimes to finish up shooting our interviews, then for the rest of the year we will be editing the documentary together. We plan for a release in 2020.

AU: What challenges have you faced in the production of this work, and what keeps you moving forward with it?

BS: We had our shooting style planed out from the beginning so not much has changed in equipment we use and how we are shooting the interviews. I think the biggest change is refining our interview questions. Also, my ability as an editor has improved over the last year while putting together the promo videos we have released. I want to put out the best documentary possible with the budget we have. This along with the desire to represent the Maritime metal scene in a way it deserves is what really drives me. I'm having a blast working on this project.

AU: What can we look forward to seeing in the final product?

BS: A professionally done documentary with an inside look into a music scene that is little known outside of its own echo chamber. A lot of history and opinions from the core of the scene, along with a lot of loud and fast metal. I'm excited to tell this story and for everyone to watch it.

AU: What does the current state of Maritimes Metal look like?

BS: The Maritime Metal scene has changed a lot over the last three decades. Currently the scene seems to be leaning wards stoner metal, bands like Hitman, Death Valley Driver, Doom Machine. Dirty death thrash, bands like Hard Charger, Napalm Raid, Ritual Warfare. Then there is still a lot of extreme metal bands like Versifist, Dischord, Dumpster Mummy. The scene is probably bigger than ever.

AU: What platform(s) will you be using to publish the documentary once it's complete?

BS: We are looking to sell and rent online streams and downloads using whatever platforms we can, iTunes, Google Play, Vimeo, Youtube Movies, etc... We will also submit to some film festivals.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

BS: I hope you all will watch the documentary once it's released. In the meantime, check out our IndieGoGo page to get a taste of what to expect, and support the project while you're there.

maritimemetaldoc.com



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Arcfiend Victoria Deaththrash 1985 - 1990

By Jason Flower

Interviews with Quin McCulloch (guitar/vocals), Dave Wilson (drums), Norm Apro (bass), Lincoln McCulloch (drums), Kirk Mercer (bass/vocals), Doug Copley (drums) in early 2019 by Jason Flower. RIP Chris Stanley (guitar). Copy editing: Frank Manley

ARCFIEND 1.1: Quin, Norm, Dave.

Quin: Arcfiend was a thrash band that became a death metal band. Dave Wilson and I started jamming in '85 just for the hell of it. First it was for

fun and then we made a song. We liked Slayer, Metallica and Venom, and then started to get into Celtic Frost, Napalm Death and Kreator. Dave spent a lot of time writing lyrics. Norm Apro joined in '86; he went to the same school as us.

Absolute Underground: What about the name and image?

Quin: Our name (Arcfiend) is based on the word "archfiend," which I found in a thesaurus. I took out the "h" and made it

mine, as I didn't want people to say "Arch-Fiend." Bands had symbols and mascots so I thought we should, too. Destruction and Sodom had armbands ...

Norm: We bought leather, got the nails – big spikes! When I met Quin I heard Destruction and Possessed. We listened to Hellhammer, Celtic Frost, Kreator. Quin would always have good riffs, he'd come in with an idea and embellish it – he's a pretty creative guy.

ARCFIEND 1.2: Quin, Norm, Lincoln

Quin: Lincoln replaced Dave in the summer of '87. We asked Dave

about Lincoln playing because Dave was working

nights and couldn't prepare properly for our shows.

AU: What are a few of your memories from the early thrash/speed metal gigs in Victoria?

Norm: Now people take it for granted and don't fear for their lives when they attend a show, but some all-ages gigs I remember – like the one with Tantrum, Armoros, and Witches Hammer – were some of the most violent ones I've ever been to, with fights going on inside and outside. Like Slayer's "South of Heaven" – fights everywhere.

AU: How did the trio end?

Norm: Unfortunately, Lincoln and I would often be waiting for Quin to come home to jam and finally got fed up. We quit and met Curt Cox to start Conviction.

ARCFIEND 2.1: Quin, Kirk, Dave

Quin: Dave Wilson and I restarted Arcfiend in 1988. Kirk Mercer joined later that year.

Dave: We were faster. Maybe together a year. We played a few house parties. Chris Stanley joined, and later we jammed at Spine Grind. I had health issues and had to leave.

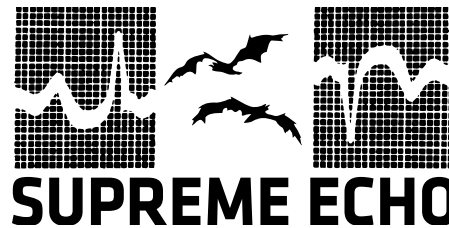
Kirk: Dave Wilson and I became friends at that private school back in the early 80s. Dave and I would jam in my dad's garage playing our own songs that sounded like Hellhammer and Napalm Death. Dave introduced me to Arcfiend and we hung out watching them play. A while after the first lineup disbanded, I was asked to play with Dave Wilson and Quin.

ARCFIEND 2.2: Quin, Chris, Kirk, Doug

Quin: In '89, Doug Copley replaced Dave and Chris Stanley joined as second guitar. Hearing Sepultura's "Inquisition Symphony" and "From the Past Comes the Storms" was a turning point. We played those songs and they became my favourite band.

Doug: I played in the Clusterfux and Abhorrence. After Abhorrence and Arcfiend disbanded, I was asked to play in the newest lineup with Quin, Kirk and Chris. Our jam space was at Spine Grind, shared with Onionhouse and others.

AU: Tell us about the late Chris Stanley.



Kirk: I remember meeting Chris at an Armoros practice out in Langford that Quin, Dave and I were at ... he may have been trying out for them. Chris was an amazing guitar player. His artistry was really great too – he made new Arcfiend logos and helped make some one-off T-shirts. He and Quin were both very talented in that way; he was a good addition to the band.

AU: How did the quartet end?

Quin: The band dissolved in '90. It fell apart because we lost our jam spot and couldn't keep it going.

AU: What did you do afterwards?

Doug: I believe Chris wanted to start something different, as he was getting into material that was different than what we were doing, and also wanting to play with other musicians in the band Grump. Quin and I joined up with Jake of Abhorrence to form Dreadnaut. Kirk went on to join other bands like Malevolence, Crust, and Purge/Punish.

Lincoln: I went on to Grump, where we had many successes.

Dave: Kirk and I did Usurper and Crust. It was a fun experiment and I had a good time doing it. I was thoroughly done after that though, and mostly just hung out.

Quin: A few years ago, Doug and I started jamming. Kirk joined a year ago and we're having fun – there's no pressure. If Chris was alive, we would do all the old stuff. We're playing some old, some new; new stuff should be offered.

Compliments to Jason Flower for taking our tapes into his hands and fixing them for this release. Without him, none of this would have happened.

supremeecho.bandcamp.com/album/arcfiend

Adam Hopkins

Interview by Malcolm Hassin

Absolute Underground: Where did you grow up?

Adam Hopkins: I grew up in Thunder Bay, Ontario.

AU: Is that where you first started skating?

AH: Yeah, so I got a board for Christmas, it was '99 or 2000, my dad painted cars, but one of the body men at the shop that he worked at had a half pipe at his house, my dad's friend started skating at 38 years old, to spend time with his kids, so they built a skate park in there basement. So on Christmas Day I got a board, and went over to Dave's house watched Dave doing 50/50 on the quarter pipe and was pretty hooked from there!

AU: Verts is your jam?

AH: Bit of both, I grew up in the country on an old farm that wasn't a functioning farm anymore but had an old barn, I don't know what drew me to it, if the ramps were just slower and not as many people skating them, but eventually me and my dad built a nine-foot vert ramp, started skating vert on that. I was 14, so had already been skating for years, I was street skating and skating mini ramps at that time as well. Four years in, I had access to vert and was kinda hooked on that.

AU When about did you make it out west?

AH: My first trip was 2006, I was using the Concrete Powder message forum, I was kinda a secluded country kid, so my way of connecting to the skateboard world was mags and vids, but if I wanted to talk to other skaters that were into what I was into, there was really no-one in Thunder Bay who was into the transition scene. I could connect with people out west of Canada or the world via Myspace or some message forums. I met this guy, Rob Nermi on there, used to shoot pictures of Sluggo and Colin Mackay back in

the day. He said I could stay at his house for a month so in 2006 when I was 16, my dad flew out here with me, met Rob and the family, stayed out here for a month. The first day I got here was the last day RDS skatepark was ever open, so I went there and skated all day 'til my legs were done. In October 2008, I moved to Vancouver permanently.

AU: You were in China for the Olympics qualifiers what's your play on that is skateboarding gearing towards a sport? Does the culture of skateboarding differ from it being a Olympic sport?

AH: If you'd asked me ten years ago, I would have never pictured this happening... but it has already been going that way with street league and the commercialization of skateboarding. It happened in the 70s, 80s, mid-90s, into the X-games, into the early 2000s with a big boom in skateboarding, the money has always kinda been there. The one thing that I think is cool about the Olympic path is a clear, defined way of going about it. Where the old way, which is amazing for many reasons, was you get sponsored, you have brands that support you, market you, sell you, it kinda comes down to you can have all the skill in the world, but if you're not the right guy/girl, not cool enough, not the right image, it's kinda an iffy thing. I think the first Olympics is going to be very interesting for skateboarding, because you're going to see underdogs or people who came from the ground, just dirty skate rats doing it. But I don't know if you're still going to see that, you will start having the kids who were bred and groomed for it. For positives, it's going to bring skateparks and facilities when it comes to talking to cities about getting money or any sort of business ventures like that for skateboarding, it brings legitimacy. As skateboarders growing up, it was like fuck that, I don't care what they think, because I was on the outside and people always treated me shitty for being a skateboarder, I don't want to live in their

world, and I feel like a lot of skateboarders still live in that world. With me nearing 30, I have always worked two or three jobs to make ends meet, to travel and skate and do that thing, there is a real world out there, it's all about how much you want to immerse yourself in it. It could be cool for some skateboarders to get a little dues, it's legitimacy and support, you blow a knee you're fucked, you work a part time job as a dishwasher and you're a semi professional skateboarder, there's not much support for you there because your El money is going to be very little, because you're working a job that isn't very stable because you wanna skate and travel. It's strange, it's different for skateboarding, the direction that skateboarding has gone, at least on that side, it makes sense at this point. It's going to be crazy to see the progression of skateboarding, as well

AU: Any advice for the kids nowadays?

AH: Depends what they wanna do. Go to the skate park, don't snake people, be friendly, smile, if you're having a hard time, don't be afraid to ask somebody for help, that applies to skateboarding and to life in general. There are a lot of things along that path of life that will pull



you in different directions, so maybe try and see the light at the end or goals along the way. Skate though it and stay on top, and if you do find yourself in a crazy position, pull yourself through that path. I've personally lost a lot of friends in the past five years here due to many different issues, it's crazy when you get older and you start losing friends and you realize the value of life, you wish you could help people a little more. That's not necessarily for the kids, but I think just keep your head screwed on straight, find something you love, stick with it, don't listen to the haters and just try at something, if you fail, dust your shoulders off and try again. I think remaining stagnant is the worst thing a human can do, and we should constantly try and move forward and better ourselves.

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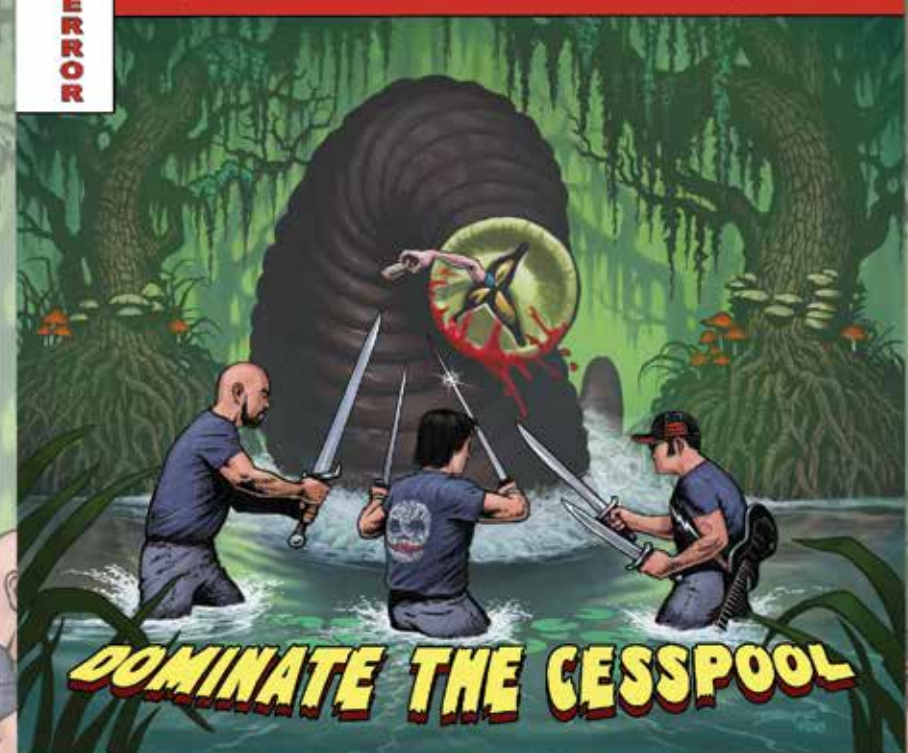
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chill and cool and positive. I think it comes out when you hear the record, I think you can feel what we were doing when we were making it. We're really excited for the people to hear it.

AU: Are you still going with socially conscious political speed metal as it says on Wikipedia?

PR: This record, I guess it has its moments, certainly. There is a song called "Divide and Conquer." It's an explanation of how a few people control the majority of the people on the planet. And then there is a song called "Revolution." It talks about some frustrating aspects of our daily lives. But then there is the hope of what it can be and the encouragement to do it. So I think mostly the theme of this record is just positives, encouraging and hopeful. I think that's mostly what people need right now. And that's what came out, so it works out.

AU: Are you still on Metal Blade Records?

PR: Yeah we are. The new record is coming out on Metal Blade after all these years.

AU: And they've been supportive your whole career?

PR: Yeah. I mean Brian signed us originally and

he's always been a big fan. Brian Slagel, who is the owner of Metal Blade and Tracy and Mike, they've all been really great to us. We have a very special relationship with them so we're very happy to be with them.

AU: Are you touring the new album?

PR: Yeah, we're on tour right now and we plan on continuing through 2020. So, it's funny, you post dates and it's like 'No Florida! No Canada!' You know, I'm like, "Just say 'Yet'". There's no Florida, no Canada yet. But there will be. We're just getting warmed up.

AU: Nice. You did a cover of the Black Sabbath song "Sweet Leaf" on this *Hemipilation* album for Normal. Canada just legalized across the whole country. Any thoughts about that?

PR: I think it's great. I think putting people in jail for smoking weed has always been a stupid thing. So the more places around the world that see that it's certainly no worse than alcohol and just leave people alone, the better off we all are.

AU: You also did a cover song of the Subhumans from Canada. Do you have a connection with Canada at all?

PR: I mean we love Canada. Our first tour was Detroit, Cleveland, Toronto and Cincinnati in 1987. The *Ignorance* tour was four dates and Toronto was one of them. Toronto has always been one of those places for us, an original place, we had a lot of friends there. We always had fun in Vancouver. We really never toured much of Canada other than that, so I'd like to change that.

AU: Any secret to the longevity of the band?

PR: I think we came along at a certain place and time in people's lives and that music was kind of happening after the first wave of like Metallica and Slayer and then a bunch of bands came in behind and I think that people were ready for that kind of music. We played for people at a certain period of time in their lives and it meant something to them and it stuck with them. I think we were just lucky timing-wise.

AU: You considered the second wave of thrash?

PR: Yeah, I think so. After the first wave then there were bands like us, Testament, Death Angel. There were a lot of Bay area bands that were coming out and there were a bunch of German bands Kreator, Destruction, Sodom happening... but there was just a lot going on. It was really cool and a really exciting time and I'm glad to have been a small part of it.

AU: Why was there such a long time between albums?

PR: Because the songs just weren't there. And then the songs just started coming back, so it looked like it was time to get started again. Nothing more than that. No big whoop.

AU: Maybe Trump was your inspiration?

PR: No, definitely not. He's not an inspiration for

anything. I remember there is a proverb that says, 'Maybe the meaning of your life is simply to be a warning for others,' and I think that is what he is an example of, unfortunately. I see him and he actually makes me sad. I feel like he's suffering a great deal because have you ever worked a job that you were woefully unprepared for and inadequate for? It's a terrible feeling, and he has that every day of his life. And he just blusters and lies and does everything to cover up for it. But the fact remains that he does not know what he is doing. And the rest of us have to suffer for it. But the one thing I remember is, it's always temporary. No matter if it's good things happening or bad things happening, appreciate the good things while they are happening because it's not going to last, it's going to change. Now Winston Churchill said something like, 'When you're in hell, just keep going. Don't stop.' So I think it's a good idea.

AU: You doing some festivals this summer?

PR: Yeah, a handful. We're going in July to do Barcelona Rockfest and then we're playing this thing in Rome in Italy called Rock the Castle, with Slayer which will be fucking killer, because they're like our heroes. And then doing Alcatraz: Hard Rock & Metal Festival and some other festivals in August and playing some shows with Testament.

AU: Anything else you want to promote?

PR: I would just say that when *Awakening* comes out in August, just go check it out. And I think that for the longtime fans that have been with us, I think they are going to be happy. For people who have never heard of us, I think they are going to like the stuff. There's heavy stuff, there's catchy stuff, there's cool stuff. When we recorded that record, we just had a very special kind of feeling, like it was amazing to be doing it together again. The whole experience was just incredibly positive. I think it comes out when you hear the record. We talked about you cannot separate the process from the final result. It's all the same thing. What you put in is what you're going to get. And we just put a lot of ourselves into it. I think it comes through. Also at the beginning of the recording process we got a new guitar player, Joey, he's 22 and he's a crushing, amazing guitar player. And our band sounds a lot stronger and tighter now, so I can't wait for people to hear us live.

AU: Final words for Canadian metal fans.

PR: We're hoping to come see you, so hold tight and don't say, 'What about Canada?' when you're posting that online, because we totally have you in mind, and we're totally going to hook you up.

facebook.com/sacredreichofficial

www.metalblade.com/us/artists/sacred-reich

PHOTO CREDIT: Stephanie Cabral

SACRED REICH

interview with vocalist/bassist Phil Rind

AU: Who are we talking with today?

Phil Rind: My name is Phil and I'm in a band called Sacred Reich.

AU: Can you give us a brief band history?

PR: We started in 1985. First record came out in '87 was *Ignorance* and we did *Surf Nicaragua* in '88 and we did *American Way* in 1990 and we did *Independent* in 93, *Heal* in 96 and a new record is coming out in August of this year for the first time in 23 years. And in between all those records coming out, we toured a whole bunch. So that's pretty much the 30-second description.

AU: What can you tell us about the new album *Awakening*?

PR: It is, you know how every band always says it's the best thing they've ever done? Well, I'm going to add our names to that and say it's the best thing that we've ever done. It is a culmination of the last 20 years of our lives... The process of making the record was really incredible and just



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The VCBC Clean Air Petition Update

By Ted Smith

There is a chill in the air across Canada, but it isn't from the crisp northern climate. Bureaucrats and politicians across the country have been cold to the cannabis culture that fought so hard to stop prohibition. For example, legalizing cannabis without giving people a comfortable legal



place to consume in public that doesn't interrupt non-smokers, demonstrates how poorly planned this scheme has been.

Furthermore, patients are being pushed to the curb with less

dignity than drug addicts. Tourists are confused when they are told the legal stores have little to no inventory of our infamous BC Bud. Then recreational users are told that there is nowhere but the sidewalk to smoke it. Craft cannabis

growers watch small-scale wine and beer producers invite customers to their locations hoping for the day they can do the same. The legal cannabis market in Canada and BC has not made any consideration for consumption sites for cannabis and this must be addressed now.

We are a few weeks into a campaign to petition the CRD to amend the Clean Air Bylaw and it is clear that there is widespread support amongst both cannabis smokers and non-smokers alike for lounges to be made legally available. Many locations throughout the CRD are helping the Victoria Cannabis Buyers Club in this quest to create a variance process that will give municipalities the option to consider granting Temporary Use Permits to facilities and events. To date, we have approximately 500 signatures in support of our cause!

We would like to send a sincere thank you to the following organizations for hosting our petition:

Vintage Funk
Trees
Shaman
Headquarters
Jupiter
Shadow Mountain
V.I.P. Victoria
Oceangrown
Also a big thanks and round of applause for Walbran Steve, who has been putting in hours gathering signatures for our petition almost every day.



The petition was started after inspectors from WorkSafe BC and Island Health paid a visit to the VCBC with the intent of shutting down the club's smoking room. After threatening to fine the club for allowing indoor consumption, Island Health appears to have backed down to give the club time to change the law so we can continue to provide this valuable service. The situation is tenuous, and Island Health is

strictly focused on compliance, but hopefully the powers that be will give us enough time to create this variance process and obtain full authority for our lounge.

While Island Health is the arm of government enforcing the Clean Air Bylaw, it is actually the Capital Region District that made up these regulations. The CRD is composed of 23 individuals from 15 different regions of the Southern section of the island, including some of the Gulf Islands. These directors, many of which are mayors, are the ones we must convince to create this variance process.

In Victoria, the city council has tried to start an outdoor pilot project but the staff concluded that there were too many legal barriers to launch it at this time. According to staff, the province is considering licensing cannabis lounges, but it appears that little has been made public about any such move from policy makers. Given BC's record in how slow that have been in licensing retail stores, it is unlikely any opportunity to get a legal permit for a cannabis cafe will happen any time soon.

Four of the Victoria city councillors also sit on the



CRD board. Gaining their support for this variance process is an important step towards getting the regional directors to consider this variance process. The club has made several attempts to persuade our local politicians, including several presentations at evening council meetings.

Even the most conservative members of Victoria's city council, Geoff Young, has stated publicly how absurd the legal situation for cannabis consumers has become. He agreed that cannabis regulations are especially difficult for those of us that live in apartments or condos in the downtown core. This is one of many reasons why we are finding many people across many demographics who support this amendment including smokers and non-smokers. Cannabis is federally legal in Canada, the next step is creating legal spaces for adult consumption.

Help us form the future of cannabis spaces in Victoria, BC by signing our petition.

You can find the petition at 826 Johnson St.

vcbc.ca

PHOTO CREDIT: Members of the Victoria Cannabis Buyers Club



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things they have done and figures there are better ways to deal with it. However, not everyone agrees with what he proposes. I chatted with Randolph about this work during Emerald City Comic Con 2019, and what readers can expect:

Absolute Underground: Whose brainchild

Fathers, Sons & The Magi Order in Skybound Entertainment's Excellence

By Ed Sum

Available now.

Issue #2 due in shelves June 19, 2019

Excellence is a terrific comic book series soon to be released by Image Comics and Skybound Entertainment. It arrives in stores a little more than a month after the Netflix program, *The Order*, debuted. It's merely coincidence that both are similar. Core to the central tale is in how both heroes are out to disrupt the secret societies they are entering into because of something they did (or now represent). I'm being vague as to not spoil the fun in reading the first issue.

Writer Brandon Thomas (*Voltron*) and artist Khary Randolph (*Noble, Tech Jacket*) have been working on their version for the past two years and their work takes a bit of inspiration from here and there. Their story concerns Spencer, a young lad coming of age and thinking he has all the answers. The Aegis are the guardians of humanity, the protectors of sacred knowledge. When this lad is about to be inducted, he learns about the

is the comic?

Khary Randolph: That genesis was Brendan's. He approached me with this idea about two years ago. He had me in mind when he was laying the foundation and from there we combined our creative juices, got the talents we wanted together and fleshed out the world.

AU: In the first issue, the intro from Brendan said he had an epiphany. Did you have one too? Or was there something else which inspired you while drawing?

KR: It's funny. The things that touched me most in this book weren't really the bulky sci-fi stuff. It was the quiet moments. There are certain scenes in the first issue, for example, that really resonated with me. The scenes with Spencer and his grandmother, GG, were based on mine. The scene where she's cutting Spencer's hair was based on my times with her. She also owned a hair salon and we had conversations similar to what's in the book. [As an artist,] you're always having to figure out how the visuals and the emotions you wish to express are properly laid out for the reader to understand.

AU: Excellence covers a lot of ground, not

only in its social commentary, but also with a young African-American kid having a lot of problems. What would you say they are?

KR: The book deals a lot with family, with race and with class. I think it's these moments lots of people can relate to, regardless of what your background or ethnicity is.

Everyone has relationships with their fathers, their mothers, and their grandmothers that I helped build. And a lot of times, as young men we tend to idolize our fathers. But at some point, you also want (as Bill did in the comic) to become your own person.

AU: What are some of the other messages?

KR: I think it's really about broken systems and how you approach that mess. At some point, as a black person, you kind of float through... You better figure out how to navigate through [the chaos] and hopefully, you try to make the world a better place. What we, as creators, do in the comic book medium is to educate readers when we can.

Not everyone has positive role models to look

up to growing up. I didn't have one when I was young and wished I did. This book is about fathers and sons. It's also about how you can improve the future for everybody.

AU: Throughout the series, what can we expect of the hero as he gets to understand this new world?

KR: Issue one provides the spark for Spencer to learn things aren't right in this world. Issue two will see him intervening. He really starts in earnest trying to fix the world as he sees it. As a young person, you have ideas. You want to jump headfirst into things that maybe you're not prepared for.

We'll show Spencer how it's not quite as easy as you think it is to fix things overnight. He gets beat up pretty harshly. Sometimes, you have to plan. And there are reasons why things are. As they say in show biz, stay tuned!

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Army of Darkness vs. Bubba Ho-Tep!

By Ed Sum

In a no-holds-barred comic book crossover titled *Army of Darkness vs. Bubba Ho-Tep* from IDW/ Dynamite Comics, Ash will have to ally with Elvis if they are to stop a deadite who picked up the pieces of when the zombie king came to life to eat senior citizens. Lately, this one-man act (Ash) has been having problems with his role as Earth's only saviour. When he realizes Elvis is doing the same job, he

believes it's time to pay him a visit. That's the first issue in a nutshell.

The rest of the four-issue saga gets crazy. These two heroes have to stop the undead from making Earth its paradise. With the King Tut exhibit hiding an artefact that can change the course of the world, the stakes are huge and the two have to chase down the revived Bubba Ho-Tep to this new treasure. There's one huge and terrific battle in a plane to make Tom Cruise jealous of, and it all boils down to who owns the Necronomicon. This book is also a portal to unleash more terrors, and nobody wants a world occupied by the walking dead.

Writer Scott Duvall keeps the tale brisk and exciting all throughout the four issues. I found it to move very much like a huge WWE style cage-match. The action is nonstop, with one cliff-hanger after another for those who followed the series in its monthly release. Thankfully, IDW will soon release a trade collecting the series.

Artist Vincenzo Federici is very clearly having fun with this work, getting to stylize the King in all his glory. Part of his style includes larger-than-life splash pages and his manga style approach beautifully suits the story.

Duvall is inserting nearly every memorable quote he recalls from Raimi's trilogy into the narrative—and coming up with a few of his own.

It's been years since any news about *Bubba Nosferatu: Curse of the She-Vampires* was made. Any notion of a film is dead, and all we have is this crossover series and *Cosmic Blood-Suckers*, a prequel to the movie, published by IDW. I love to see more in comic-book form. As for when, let's hope sales from both the trade and original back issues will tell Dynamite & IDW the fans want it!

For more looks into comicdom, tales of terror and movies, please follow @edohotep on Twitter or Facebook.

@edohotep

ARTIST PROFILE



Bob Camp

Interview by Ed Sum

Absolute Underground: Could you please introduce yourself?

Bob Camp: Hi. I'm Bob Camp, and I'm well known for the *Ren & Stimpy Show*. I really enjoyed being very involved with the production—the writing, coming up with the ideas, developing the characters. The thing I enjoyed a lot was directing. I got to work with Billy West, June Lockhart and Dom DeLuise. Frank Gorshin (original Riddler from the 60s *Batman*).

AU: Was there anything that was too crazy that the networks didn't want to air?

BC: Oh sure, all the time. You have to satisfy their need to self-censor, so we would put in red herring jokes—we make jokes specifically for them to cut out because we knew which stuff would push buttons and we got our share of red flags. But honestly, sometimes that stuff got through and we'd be like, "Wow, that got through! One for the team!"

AU: How did you get interested in art?

BC: I don't remember not drawing. I used to draw when I was a kid. I'd copy characters out of the newspaper comic strips and my mom made me a little blue suitcase with art supplies and I'd carry it around everywhere. I would sit down somewhere and draw. It was what I always did, what I did throughout my school career instead of studying. I didn't care. I knew I'd be drawing for a



living. I worked at resorts and amusement parks, drawing caricatures and soon met Gary Holleran, a cartoonist in Provincetown, Massachusetts. He took me to New York, introduced me to Larry Harmon and he got me a job working on a magazine doing movie parodies. Soon, I moved to working on comic books from there, working on *G.I. Joe*, *The Nam*, *Conan* and things like that.

AU: What Marvel stuff did you do?

BC: I worked on *Conan the Barbarian*, *The 'Nam*, *G.I. Joe*, *Bizarre Adventures*, *Savage Tales*—all the war titles. I really enjoyed working on *Conan* and was fortunate to be John Buscema's inker. I learned a lot, it was a lot of fun. And the thing I liked best about it is there were no straight edges. I didn't have to draw perspective or buildings or cars or any of that kind – guns, you know just draw like horses and caves and shacks and things like that. There were swords— I think was the most technical thing I had done.

AU: What was the genesis of *Ren & Stimpy*?

BC: We had pitched a different show idea to Nickelodeon and they liked the dog and the cat. Just make a show about them. So we made a pilot in that ran in the Spike and Mike's Twisted Animation Festival to broad acclaim. People really like it and Nickelodeon picked up the series and we made cartoons.

AU: What's your relationship with Dan Slott?

BC: He's been writing *The Amazing Spider-Man* for quite a while. Back in the day, he wrote a piece for the *Ren & Stimpy* comic. He wrote Number

Six of the *Ren & Stimpy* comic, which was "Spider-Man versus Powdered Toast-Man"—which was his very first Spidy story. I think he had a lot to do with the new *Spider-Verse* movie, which is fantastic.

AU: Have you drawn any album covers?

BC: I did the album cover for Afrika Bambaataa and Renegades Of Funk back in the day. I did two Nucleus album covers and also rap and hip hop stuff.

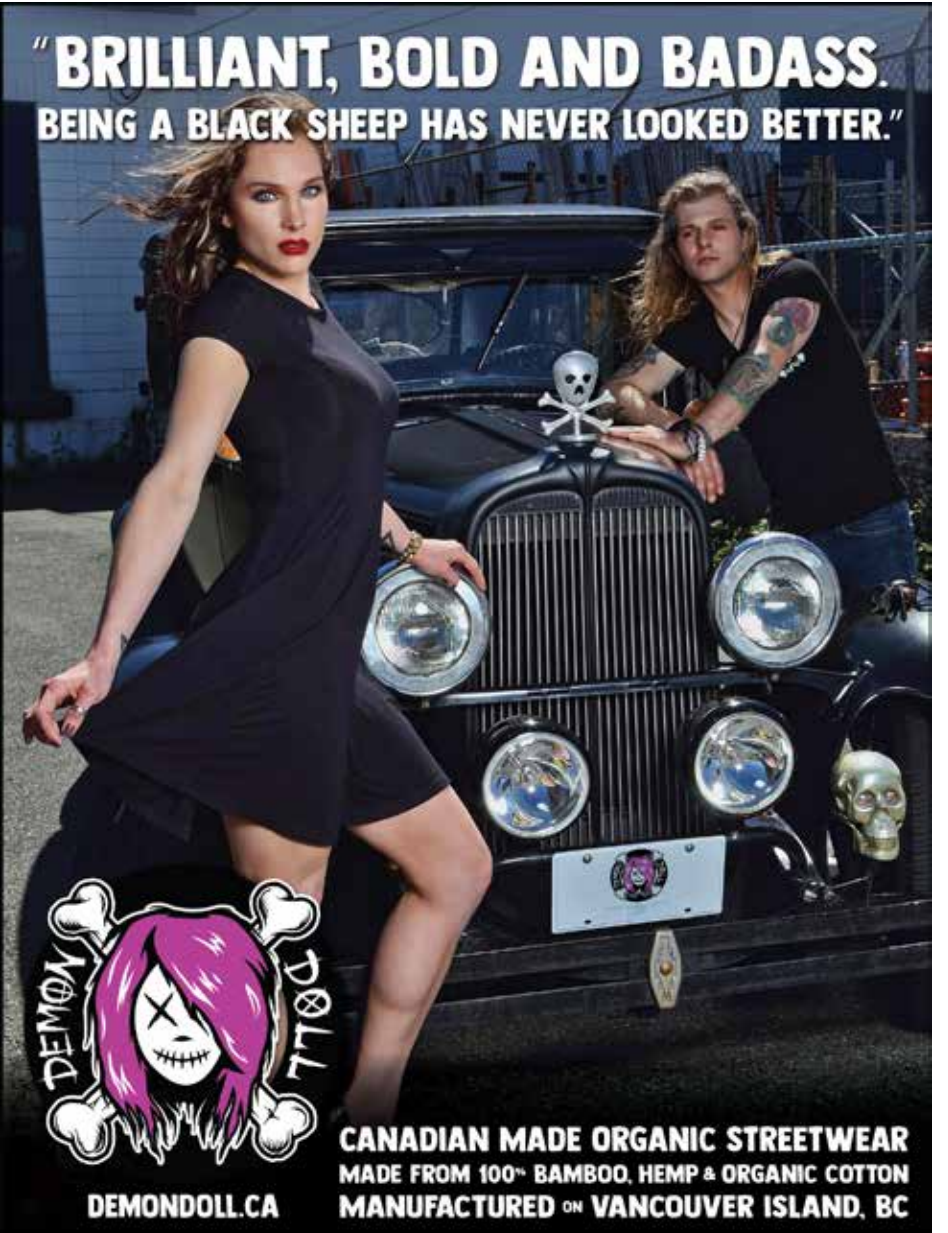
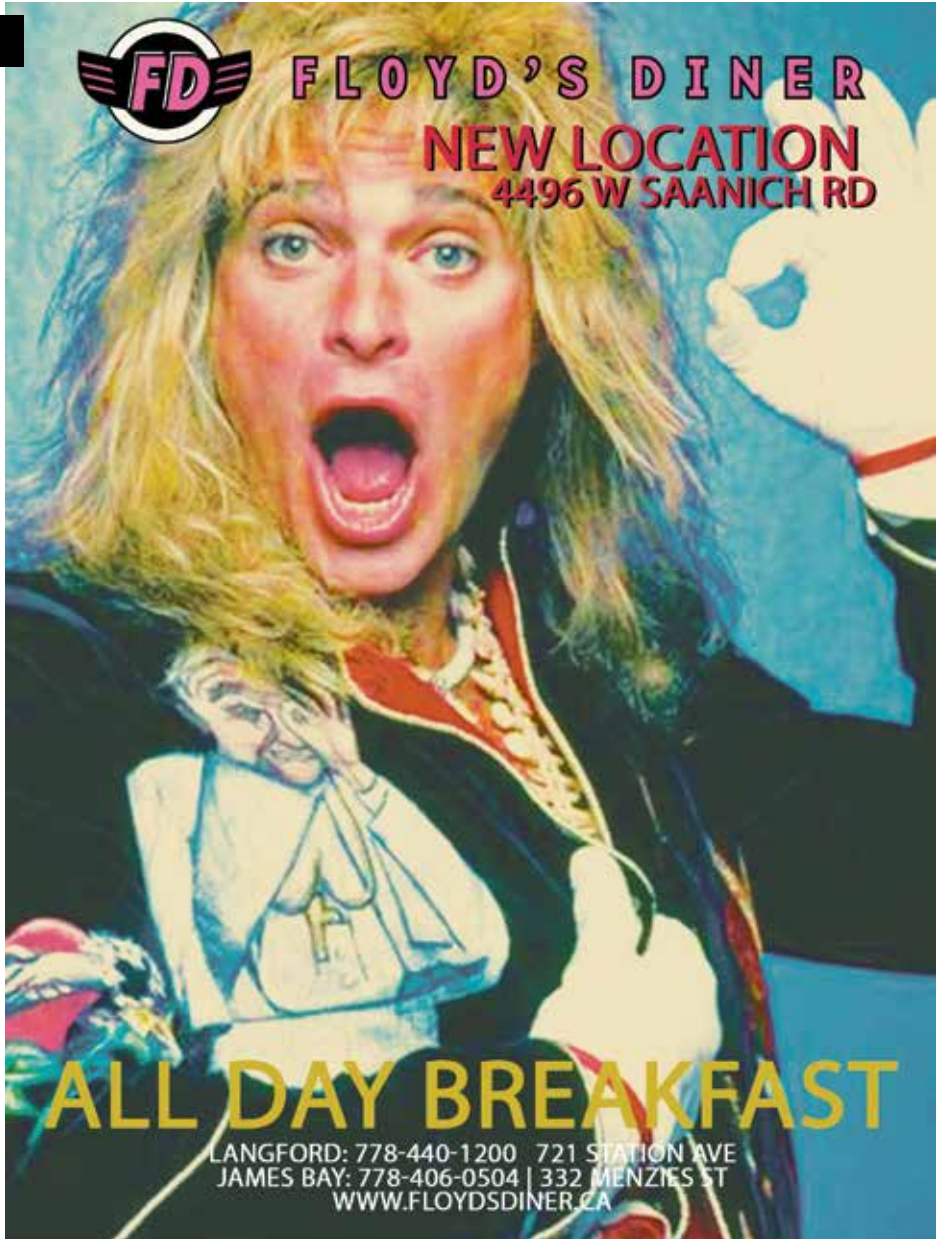
AU: What do you think of Capital City Comicon in Victoria B.C.?

BC: It's been great. People are really nice. We got to see some old friends and make some new ones. Just having a good time.

AU: Do you have any final words?

BC: If you want more *Ren & Stimpy*, call Nickelodeon and say, "Hey what was going on here? Get Bob Camp to make more! You don't want Canadians mad at you."

boblabbshop.com/





Baroness

Interview with drummer Sebastian Thomson
By Willow Gamberg
Absolute Underground: You guys just finished a South American tour, how was it?

Sebastian Thomson: It was really amazing. Especially for me it was a big deal because I'm from Argentina, and I left after high school, I've tried to go down there with bands I play in but I never have, I've only been down there to play once with my solo project. So it was really awesome for me to go down there with Baroness, I had the bass player from my high school band show up and my cousin and my aunt and friends, it was awesome.

AU: Looks like you guys had pretty good audiences all through?
ST: We did, for sure. The audiences were amazing, and especially in Argentina and Brazil, I don't know if you've ever seen videos of South American soccer games, everybody's jumping up and down and chanting and singing, it was kinda nuts. People were like singing the guitar solos, in Argentina they even sing their own weird melodies in between songs when we're not playing. It was really good, I loved it.
AU: So next up you have a trip across the US?
ST: In the spring we did a tour with Deafheaven, which was like, pretty comprehensive North American tour, and originally it was meant to be in support of the album, but for lots of different reasons the album hadn't come out yet before

that tour, so now that the album's out, we're hitting the cities we didn't hit on that tour, so it's mainly southeast US. And then later next year I'm sure we'll do another US tour and hit the cities we did with Deafheaven, but now with the album released.
AU: You guys did that last tour with Zeal and Ardor too, right?
ST: Correct. We did a co-headlining thing, like we switched who played last every night, and I've gotta say, it was one of the most fun tours I've ever been on. The tour was great, we had a lot of fun, lot of hanging out, a little bit of partying, having



AU: You guys did some acoustic sessions a little while back, I saw you were playing guitar for those?
ST: That was a little bit of a joke, I do play guitar and we do have jams backstage playing Eagles songs. We're not actually performing just goofing off. But we do have a joke band, which is The Beagles, which is Baroness doing Eagles songs, and in that one I'm actually Glenn Fry in that one.
AU: You guys are doing a ton of touring, do you have a tour survival kit? How do you survive it all?
ST: We are kind of lucky in a sense. First of all, I've been touring for over 25 years and I think the first thing I would say is that you have to be very zen at times, you have to be like, you know what? I'm going to be hungry today. Tomorrow I'm going to be tired. You have to lower your expectations about creature comforts, that's the first thing. The other thing is that I would say is ask and you shall receive. Just ask the promoter for what you need, and usually they will try to help you out as long as you're not being a dick. The other thing is treat everybody at the venue with respect - be friendly

and understand that most people who work in a club, they probably play in a band and they want to be on tour and they don't want to be there, carrying gear or whatever. So just be cool. For us specifically, it really helps to have a good crew, too. Our crew is not only super professional and hard working, we're all friends, too. So that really helps. We're also really lucky because at this point we get to tour on a bus. I would say my most cherished thing is... sleep on tour, for me, is more important than food. Being well rested is really important, and when you're on a tour bus, you can go take a nap at any time. That really alleviates a lot of grouchiness on tour... I really can't complain, we're all pretty lucky.

AU: What's the future of Baroness looking like?
ST: This year is going to be super busy, which I'm excited about. Everyone

just seems to be firing on all cylinders right now, I feel like we're willing to work, and that was not always the case. We're all on the same page. I'm really excited to play these songs, I'm stoked for the tour and stoked for the fall, I think next year we're going to be doing even more touring. I always talk about how sure there are all these albums that some genius wrote in their bedrooms that are better than anything we've heard, but if you don't get out there and play it for people it's almost like it doesn't exist. So I'm just really stoked to make our music real. I feel like after playing a show, when I get in my bunk, I feel like a really big sense of satisfaction, this thing in our heads became real. I love that feeling, like I actually accomplished something.

AU: What's happening with your other bands, Publicist and Trans Am?
ST: So Trans Am is still technically a band but the other two dudes are fully families up, day jobs.. one of them lives in California and one in New Zealand so it's a little difficult. Our last album came out a few years ago, *California Hotel*, that's another Eagles reference for you. We did some touring on that... at this point, it's just sort of three friends and their weird art project more than a real band, which is cool. Less pressure. Publicist, I released an EP six months ago, which was a little bit of a collaboration, you know Igor Cavallera? So he also does electronic music, we've become friends, he's from Brazil, so I made this kind of crossover thing and he did some percussion on it and we released it on his label. Hopefully when I go to Europe in the fall and we have some days off, maybe we can do a party somewhere.

AU: Any final words for Canadian fans?
ST: We're definitely coming back to Canada in 2020 and it's definitely going to be a headlining *Gold & Grey* tour, and I love going to Canada. A lot of times, I'm like, "This is what America COULD be like." Let's be honest, civilized, you know what I'm saying? Anyway, I always have fun partying with Canadian fans and I'm stoked.

www.yourbaroness.com
Photo courtesy of Baroness





Heavy Hitting Horrorfest

By Ed Sum

There's more to what lurks in Whistler, British Columbia in them thar hills with Heavy Hitting Horrorfest set to take over this ski-resort come Halloween 2019! It's time to plan whether or not it's safe to trick or treat in the safety of neighbourhood, or a place where the wolves play with antelope in morbid ways. The fun began in 2002 and it has grown to become one of the largest and longest-running show in Western Canada, attracting talents from all around the world.

After the glowing success of HorrorFest Resurrection in 2018, the plans for this year will

be big. It will take place on Wednesday, October 30, 2019. For 2019's Apocalypse, Banks and event producer Chantal Limoges said, "There will be blood."

Through generous cash sponsorship from local and national partners—generously provided by Gibbons Whistler, LUX

Visual Effects, Sea to Sky Dream Team, the Directors Guild of Canada, Canadian Wilderness Adventures to name a few—Heavy Hitting Horrorfest currently has \$4500 in cash to hand out at their HorrorFest: Apocalypse event this October, to encourage new filmmakers to continue producing.

"It's incredible to see this kind of support," Banks says. "Over the years this little festival has evolved into a proper incubator of independent film talent and being able to offer this kind of prize money can actually really help people on the next step of their film careers."

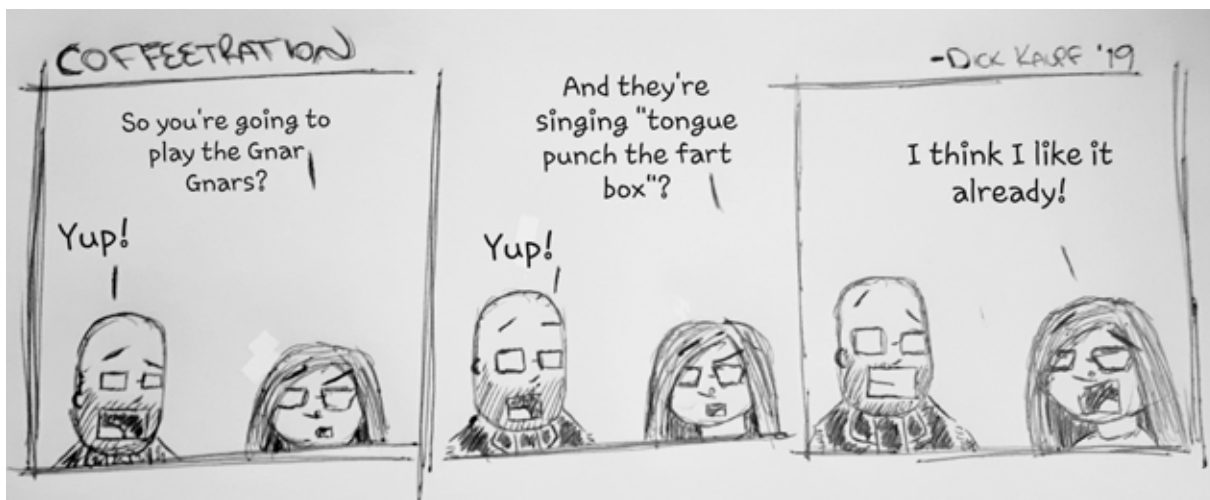
For those who just want to party, now is the time to plan. For those who have a short film of under 10 mins in length that they wish to submit, please visit <https://heavyhitting.com>.

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Rough Spells

Interview by Roger The Shrubber

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking with and what are you most infamous for?

Maija Martin: We are a womb metal band from Tkaronto (Toronto), Canada known for calling out fascist metalheads through song.

AU: Give us a brief history of Rough Spells, who are you and what are you all about?

MM: Many moons ago Sarena sang some vocals on a record for Maija's old metal band and blew everyone out of the water. Six years ago we started jamming every Thursday. Last year we pressed our vinyl EP *Modern Kicks for the Solitary Witch* and some people in the internet liked it. Our first bass player Dave moved to New York City and Kerry grew his hair and joined the band.

AU: You're described as Witch n Roll, what does that sound like? What can we expect to experience at your live show?

MM: Think Anton LaVey meets Heart.

AU: Tell us about the queer female-fronted doom movement you're a part of. Why is it important for bands like yours to pave the way for others?

MM: The doom community has been a very supportive and welcoming place for us. A lot of women and female-identified people are killer players and songwriters. Sister bands like Doomstress and Psychic Hit are living proof.

AU: You're releasing a new full-length album this summer, is that right? Tell us about it! What can we expect to hear? Does it explore any particular themes or topics?

MM: *Ruins at Midday* will be coming out later this summer on DHU (Dark Hedonistic Union Records) in the Netherlands and will be distributed by our good friends at Fuzzed and Buzzed. It explores themes of death, heartbreak, and how lucky we are to be gay.

AU: You released a single track on Canada Day, where can we hear it? What's the song about?

MM: "Grise Fiord" is about trying to address the

fucked up shit that settlers have done very recently in Canada, especially in the North. Both the Qikiqtani Truth Commission and the National Inquiry into MMIWG recently released calls to action. The government of Canada has yet to properly respond. All of the proceeds from the digital sales of "Grise Fiord" are going to It Starts With Us, a group that honours the lives of missing and murdered indigenous women, girls, trans and two-spirit people. You can find the song on our Bandcamp.

AU: How can rock n roll and heavy metal communities engage in meaningful acts of reconciliation and decolonization, within our own context?

MM: Metal does not belong to bearded white dudes and settlers. Bands like Slayer have written about cultural genocides for

decades. We need to make metal welcoming to all and recognize that in North America everything we do is on stolen land.

AU: You have a BC tour coming up, tell us about it! Will you be going anywhere else? Are there any cities you're particularly looking forward to playing?

MM: We are very excited to play at Wheelies in Victoria with Crimson Witch on August 2! We are planning to go to Europe in next summer with some of our DHU labelmates.

AU: What else is in the works? What does the future hold for Rough Spells?

MM: We plan to spend the winter writing songs around the fire, using ritual to honour the psychic substance and power of women.

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already?

MM: None of us actually smoke weed.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

MM: Don't lose your chance magic.

roughspells.bandcamp.com

PHOTO CREDIT: Samantha Blanchette

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Nightmarer

Interview by AU Editorial

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking with and what are you most infamous for?

Simon: You're talking to Simon, co-founder and guitarist of the band.

AU: Give us a brief history of the band, who are you and how did you form?

Simon: Paul Seidel (drums) and I played in WFAHM prior to starting Nightmarer. When it became clear that WFAHM would call it quits, the both of us decided to start a new band and continue to compose music together. We met our vocalist, John, all the way back in 2009 on the Thrash & Burn tour in Europe. He was with Success Will Write Apocalypse Across the Sky at the time, and we became friends, kept in touch after the tour and always talked about starting a project

together.

Once Paul and I had written the first few songs, he was one of only a few vocalists we tried, and it became clear that he was the perfect fit. I moved from Berlin to Tampa, Florida at around the same time, so the distance seemed less of an obstacle and we moved ahead with working on our debut full length.

AU: You're setting out on the Devastation in the Nation tour this summer with Belphegor and Dark Funeral, that's going to be a hell of a trip! I understand it's also your debut live performance – how did this come about and what are your feelings going into this monster tour?

Simon: We've been very patient about waiting for the right tour to jump on and this one seemed to be the perfect choice. The first show of the tour was our first live performance ever indeed,

and it went over very well. We're all touring veterans for the most part, so we weren't overly anxious about it. It felt very natural for me to get back on stage. Our mission for this tour is to let our music and performance do the talking. Nightmarer is a lot more dissonant than the rest of the bands on this package, so I believe that we have something sonically unique to add to this tour.

AU: Are there any cities in particular that you're stoked to play?

Simon: The Pacific Northwest is my favourite area of the United States, so I am looking forward to spend some time up there. It's gonna be my first time ever in Canada as well, and of course I'm looking forward to our two "hometown" shows in Tampa and NYC.

AU: What can we expect to experience when we see you play live?

Simon: Soul-crushing misery.

AU: Tell us about your debut album, *Cacophony of Terror*. What can we expect to hear? Does it explore any particular themes or topics, lyrically or otherwise?

Simon: The album deals with a character that is on a path of total self-annihilation. He is battling a demon he isn't sure even exists and tries everything to rid himself of what ever it is that is making his life a living nightmare. Ultimately, it's a losing battle. The protagonist doesn't survive this ordeal.

AU: Do you have new material in the works, and will we hear any of it on this upcoming tour?

Simon: We're going to start writing our next album after this tour. No new material will be performed just yet.

AU: What other projects have you all been involved in or are currently part of?

Simon: John (vocals) was also in Gigan and Dehumanized. Paul plays drums for The Ocean. I'm working (very slowly) on a project with Christian from Valborg.

AU: Being all experienced musicians, what will life on the road look like with Nightmarer? Do you have an essential tour survival kit?

Simon: Working with a group of stand up, professional and good people is THE essential tour survival kit. There's no room for larger-than-life egos in the Nightmarer camp. We're here to crush these crowds first and foremost, that's the objective and everyone has to be and is on board with that.

AU: What does the rest of the year hold for you as a band? Do you have more tours booked? Any plans to record?

Simon: Like I said, we will mostly be focusing on writing new material, but we're open to do another tour if the right one comes along. We also want to make it over to Europe as soon as possible.

AU: What are your goals for the future of this band?

Simon: It's quite simple: Put out and perform more Total Dissonance Worship. I don't want to give away too much, but we have a very clear agenda for Nightmarer.

AU: What should we know about Nightmarer that we don't already?

Simon: Nothing in particular. We're not the kind of band that spells everything out for everyone. Our music should do the talking.

AU: Any final words for Canadian readers?

Simon: Our first show in Vancouver was seriously one of the best on this tour and we're hearing great things about the Canadian East Coast, so make sure to come out early and see us do our thing.

nightmarer.bandcamp.com


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PHOTO CREDIT: Justina Villanueva

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SCOTTO MOORE

YOUR FAVORITE BAND CANNOT SAVE YOU



Scotto Moore: Your Favorite Band Cannot Save You

By Ed Sum

Scotto Moore is a playwright from Seattle, Washington bringing his taste of the bizarre into the printed word. After being a singer at an early age and studying theatre in college, he blended the two in a bunch of works for Annex Theater. Locally, they were well received and when done at the Fringe level, he believes this achievement made him seriously decide on what the next big step for his career should be.

After spending 15 years producing shows like *H. P. Lovecraft: Stand-Up Comedian!* (available on YouTube) and offering web series like *CHERUB: The Vampire With Bunny Slippers*, to imprint his style to the masses, his book *Your Favorite Band Cannot Save You* is the next logical step. He favours writing science fiction, but in this recent work, it's a blend of horror and heavy metal.

In theatre, it's easy enough to get everyone in the production giving the creator feedback on their work leading up to the opening night. With written material, it's a touch more difficult. As any new writer can tell you, learning from workshops is key. Established talents do not depend on them as much, but still have people handy to look at early drafts and give feedback. Obtaining an exhaustive set of responses, as he described it, is important to triangulate what the right direction is for the book.

"I imagined myself to be a science fiction guy, but when I was looking at all the influences of the things that I've read over the years, there's a lot

of fantasy in there. I'm not thinking of *Game of Thrones* fantasy, but magic realism—think *Night Circus* by Erin Morgenstern or *The Golem and The Jinni* by Helene Wecker," said Moore.

While at Emerald City Comic Con 2019, promoting *Your Favorite Band Cannot Save You*, he mentioned how he's put his own experience to put into a novella length work. Scotto revealed, "I am a music blogger and have been for many years. I wanted a story that would explore this side of my life and smash with H. P. Lovecraft."

The premise is simple: the narrator finds music that is far more intoxicating than he realizes. He's drawn to it since the band is releasing a new track the very next day, for ten days. Every successive track adds to the surrounding supernatural mayhem that follows as they go on tour, and it builds steadily into one long crescendo.

Like the book, the number of enthusiastic supporters for it has grown and will continue to do so. Moore has put a lot of himself into this piece, saying, "As a playwright, I spend a lot of time writing dialog, and over the course of 15 years, I've heard so many actors recite my words. I can tell what sounds natural, what doesn't sound natural, and so when I came to writing a prose novel, the hook for me was by making it first person.

He described the journey to be like going back through time – some of Lovecraft's stories involve heroes spirited away to strange vistas or finding themselves in a strange library of living history where what's experienced is mind-numbing. Instead of wordy prose, Moore's work is very lean. This author mentioned that a novella length piece does not allow room for the plot to evolve into something bigger. This tale has a John Dee influence to it, and he said he's no accomplished occultist; He finds what he likes and injects the best bits into his work. It's just simple fun for him.

As for what's next, Moore revealed his next novel is about a cabal of people who invent a way to



weaponize linguistics. He can't say any more until it's ready to edit.

Most of this author's plays, web series and books can be found online. For those looking for print editions, Amazon.com is the best place to search. For the latest updates, please visit Scotto.org

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Villain

Interview by Roger The Shrubber

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking with and what are you most infamous for?

Caleb Beal: I am Caleb - for the sake of relevance I'll say I'm most infamous for singing, playing guitar, and losing my teeth in your beer.

AU: Give us a brief history of the band, who are you and how did you form?

BC: We are Villain, based out of Toronto Ontario, Canada. Basically I met Jake Greasy at a festival in Calgary years ago we were both playing - him in his band Vicious from Halifax, and me in mine, Midnight Malice from Toronto. He was singing and playing drums in his band and I remember being totally blown away. Anyways years later we'd both moved on from said bands and I heard he moved to Toronto. So I got in touch and started playing in a jampspace Jake had access to.

AU: You've just returned from the road across Canada and back, are there any cities you were particularly stoked to hit?

CB: I was looking forward to Calgary and Vancouver. I was born in and spent a great deal of my life out west before moving to Toronto and it was awesome to reconnect with the scene out there. That being said we had a great time everywhere we went - everything on the island was incredible and my first time in Winnipeg and Thunder Bay were both pleasantly suprising.

AU: You guys have already toured plenty this year - What does life on the road look like with Villain? Do you have an essential tour survival kit?

CB: Bananas and bottles of water. And lots of beer. Also found it handy to keep gas in the tank. Mostly just a lot of King Kobra and heavy drinking.

AU: I have one piece of advice, do NOT get the Tim Hurlin's breakfast sandwich on the french toast, it's fucking weird and gross - my band

just learned this the hard way. Do you have any Canadian fast food hacks you care to share?

CB: "Tim Hurlins" (nice) was certainly a staple on the road - admittedly, we decided to forgo all sandwich options and stick to giant coffees. It's harder to piss in what they wrap the sandwiches in when your done with them. Bread and peanut butter (or Vegimite in Kane's case...), hummus and pita, and SHIT LOADS of beer. Also, if you didn't piss in your giant coffee cup yet, you can fill it up with jambalaya at the store when you're picking up beer and hummus.

AU: What can we expect to experience at a live Villain show?

CB: Expect a thorough shirtless swaddling and a massive hangover. We love to get a good party going and are always obliged. Lots of spilt beer and chicks squealing.

AU: You guys say "No Heroes," so who is your favourite Villain?

What are your thoughts on Anti-Heroes?

CB: Not sure I could name a favorite Villain - I think I've thought of it more as an attitude or state of mind. I've always gravitated to the bad guys, the underdogs - protagonists are too predictable. I advocate and glorify grease and sleaze and heavy metal because those are the things that I cherish - also the bad guys generally look cooler, and get more pussy.

AU: What's happening music-wise in the Villain camp? Any plans to record this year? Any more tours on the horizon?

CB: We've been working on and demoing new material and have plans to be in the studio over the next two months to record a full length record. We're perpetually booking dates but our main focus is the record right now.

AU: How was the 420 show at SBC with Thor and Road Rash?! We heard it was a wicked time.

CB: Ripping gig - Sheldon Byer knows the deal. Awesome to get a bunch of people and sick bands out, it was my first time at SBC and the venue ruled. We smoked a shit load of pot all day which only added to the majesty of the event. Tons of beers, great attendance, and all around everything you want from a raging gig.

AU: You guys are always dressed to the nines and living the rock and roll lifestyle... what did you think of that Motley Crue documentary that came out recently, based on the book *The Dirt*? Did it do the band justice or not so much?

CB: I personally never watched it, mostly for that reason. I listened to a lot of Crue when I was young (still do...), watched a ton of footage, I just couldn't imagine some one like playing Tommy Lee and shit and doing him any justice. I just avoided it all together. The other cats seemed to enjoy it - just have to not be too critical.

AU: What's the craziest thing that's happened to Villain, either on the road or at a show?

CB: It's hard to answer this, I feel we are ever surrounded by crazy shit and perpetuate chaos. To choose just one slice... this chick got her head smashed open at our show in Thunder Bay - we took her to the hospital after the gig.

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already?

CB: You won't catch me running, I don't feel fear - I rule the streets at night, I'm ever mean and always here!

AU: Any final words for our readers?

CB: Would just love to thank everyone we met out west and anyone that helped us out notably:

Road Rash, Time Rift, Dustin and Riot City, Ol' Liam and Jen, Onur and Black Pirates, Kerry and New Leaf Outreach in Naniamo, Dan Neild, Craig Rose and Rose Management, and of course, Ira and the notorious *Absolute Underground*. Thank you and remember, DON'T BE A HERO!

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PHOTO CREDIT: Steph Meyer

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Absolute Album Reviews



Waingro - III Sludgelord Records/ No List Records

Twelve short but sweet blasts of fuzzy grunge rock is what you'll get from this west coast trio. "Red Death" comes at you like Fu Manchu amped up on an endless supply of coffee. Just as you are getting into the bluesy riffs, this track bows down to the drone with power chords wailing with feedback, and the tempo splitting in half, bringing forth some nasty sludge.

Full of memorable tracks, such as "Bay Area Cult" which has great stomping grooves and scream along refrains, this delirious album has as much sweetened ear candy alongside the out of control sonic wild fires. "Dead Calm" is a wicked blitzkrieg of a punk rocker that is reminiscent of a beast not unlike Mudhoney-meets-Motorhead.

A great third album that sees Waingro add to the stoner rock haze they have been

perfecting for the last five years.
-Dan Potter



Vokonis - Grasping Time The Sign Records

Heavy prog trio Vokonis has the sludge to swivel your dazed head around so you can see your own shadow. Looking backward for inspiration, they have locked on to the goal of making a stoner-rock epic that will be remembered then forgotten and then remembered again, something like Mastodon's *Crack the Sky*.

The bar is clearly raised high out of the gate with "AntlerQueen" which blazes a path with super-sonic fuzz riffs culminating in delirious Floydisms with gurgling echo-drenched guitars. Sounds become gateways, and the psychedelic journey is thrilling. "Embers" lurches out the door like freed ghost energy as mournful chords intersperse the thunderstorm like guitar chugging like a great flood of warm water is beginning to surge.

Behemoth-heavy, but in a cozy blanket sort of way, these guys have meshed together just the right ounces of thunderous power into an underground classic.
-Dan Potter



Tryglav - Night of Whispering Souls Extreme Metal Music/ Rockshots Records

Witch dirges and pitch black feelings of doom rip through the headphones on "Under My Skin" as these Croatian extreme black metalers have come for your skull. Relentless snare drum bashing is the ritualistic bonding mention they believe in and the pure aggression is shattering.

Using plague doctor imagery and other horror related abominations, this band creates fresh sounding brutality that those otherwise bored craniums will gladly bang to. The track "Night of Whispering Souls" has terrifying wretched vocals and speed freak rhythms that break down from time to time to add impressive dynamic substance. Guitars provide ample melodic deviations whilst a tornado of spit and rage is set upon unnamed adversaries by the beast of a vocalist who must have a very thickened larynx.

Album closer "Beyond the Limit" is like a beer-hall shout along anthem for werewolves on their night of feasting. An endless night of screaming awaits you.
-Dan Potter



Torpor - Rhetoric of the Image Sludgelord Records

Torpor has a scalding original sound that's one part multi-layered experimental doom and two parts heavy sludge beast. The hypnotic breakdown in "Benign Circle" echoes out from an abyss of cathartic energy before crashing into low tuned angst barely holding form as those flabby guitar strings start to lose pitch and sink into the bubbling tar.

Frost bitten sounds on "Two Heads on Gold" drop the temperature for some spoken word. This represents quite an experimental side to the band as they are into making sound art full of intriguing jumping off points. More lingering thoughts open the closing track "Mourning the Real" as instrumental debris slowly coalesces into a pummeling juggernaut of sludgy riffs that continue the scorching path to the bottom straight

through the volcanoes mouth.

There is maximum gravity a plenty on this monstrously heavy five-song release where several tracks will hold you in their grasp past the ten-minute mark.

-Dan Potter



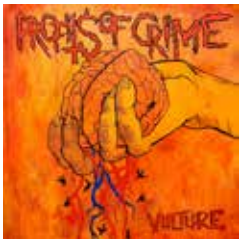
Sleepcircle - From the Heavens through the Window Independent

Grunge inspired track "Pumpkin Head" has meaty guitar riffs that broadcast dissonant anthems of swirling tension. Singer Curtis Sharp howls in a Gord Downey-meets-William Duvall sort of way, and the AIC influence gets even more pleasing on "Acid Rain" where chunky metal riffage and vocal harmonies turn your guts to butterflies.

Using classic 90s approaches to songwriting results in introspective songs that also rock outwards. "Bring it On" is just such a track where this Vancouver five-piece crushes it with great lyrics and warm guitars playing off one another with just the right amount of distortion. Each song is very consistent and blends into one another without any jolting stylistic changes, so get ready to drift away with a surprisingly relaxing rock experience.

It's also great to hear a young independent band write songs that are directly inspirational to them rather than cater to the trends. This record is a cool passionate creation that shouldn't be missed out on by fans of rocks last great explosion.

-Dan Potter



Profits Of Crime - Vulture EP

Profits Of Crime is back with a new six-tune EP entitled *Vulture*. As a follow-up to 2015's *Worship*, this release features material reminiscent of RKL's *It's A Beautiful Feeling* and other early Nardcore bands. It cooks along at a medium-fast clip with on-the-edge vocals, chromatic buzzsaw guitar riffing, rumbling bass and relentlessly pounding drums that will satisfy the most diehards out there. Recorded at Alchemy Studios in Calgary in only a couple of hours, Adam (vocals), Jer (guitar), Micah (bass) and Jeremiah (skins) all lay it out on the line and deliver the kicks you're looking for. Their tightest release yet, *Vulture* demonstrates that Profits Of Crime have a lot to offer, so look forward to catching these wingnutz ripping shit up live whenever you get the chance.

-Mark Jak Morrison



KOSM - Eyes on the Inside
Independent

The material on this EP plays around with the lore found in the Bloodborne game using sonically detailed musicianship that will impress even the most skeptical of Tool fans. In fact, the super wicked blackened vocals that start off “Yharnam” are a welcome departure from their still recent former material. The A Perfect Circle vibes are given a nice evil twist and the riffs are more winding then ever before.

A lot of energy clearly went into this shortened release; the amount of great complexity stuffed together here shows a band evolving with leaps and bounds. I particularly like the heavier elements such as on “A Call Beyond” as witch vocals screech out decrees of a darkened void. It’s definitely still largely a melodic offering whether it’s the power vocals in the choruses, or the lurching guitar riffs, but I am most drawn into the haunted caverns of singer Jessie Grace’s vocal wretches that seem to truly embody the emaciated creature that lives in the basement of that abandoned country house.

A tight conceptual EP that you don’t want to miss.
-Dan Potter



Infrared - Back to the Warehouse
Independent

After a twenty seven-year hiatus, Infrared have risen with a strong work ethic releasing two albums in 2016 and 2018. And here they are back again with that “Thrashzilla” sound combining the best classic metal has to offer with a modern twist.

Opening track “Meet My Standards” is a great whiplash-inducing track with the lyrics “Cultured bastards, meet my standards.” The fire-meets-fire riffage on “One Mouth Two Faces” torches a path for rage filled words sung with gravel mixing vocal stylings reminiscent of a more forceful Hetfield. Plenty of fast hammer ons and explicit tapping, so these guys have the power of the 80s along with today’s rhythmic abominations held down with impressive frequency.

We all know thrash metal will never die but it’s great to hear participants from that era keep coming back with even greater ideas in tow.
-Dan Potter



Hope Drone - Void Lustre
Moment of Collapse/ Sludgelord Records

On this, their third full-length release, the Aussie group stretches and elongates things, in particular the spaces leading up blast beat mega-storms. The result like on the opening track “Being into Nothingness” is a world of emotion that oscillates between extremes of calmness, nothingness and blinding rage.

Definitely residing in the modern black metal camp, these guys love dissonance and atmosphere as they excavate songs out of the same musical remnants that groups like Krallice or Wolves in the Throne Room prefer to dredge up. “This Body Will Be Ash” ups the tempos and screeches along a twisted railway track where it terminates with wailing guitar feedback and ominous drones.

A lot of care was put into this texturally rich album, where sounds develop and evolve through intensity bringing to light further depths to explore in the quest for metallic abyss.
-Dan Potter



Concrete Funeral - Ultimatum Judicium
Independent

With intense vocal chord-grinding excess, the track “Speak of the Devil” breaks loose and showcases this groups unbridled love of hillbilly thrash. The speed is death defying and immediately conveys a sense of enthusiasm; these guys clearly believe in their what they’re doing.

Depicted on the album cover is what appears to be Satan reciting from a pentagram-embazoned book. The band in turn preaches a radical form of intense blitzkrieg metal full of the crazy breakdowns and grueling riffage pushing those palm mutes to the extreme, in other words perfect house band music for weekly black masses. “Holo-Comb” is so in your face it sounds like this band is happy Slayer is retiring so they can take over the speed demon throne.

The glorious mix of modern and classic thrash gets even more ferocious on “Code Adam” where wretched-out vocals will make you fear the larynx.

-Dan Potter



Children of the Sun - Flowers
The Sign Records

Inspired by Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix and the year 1969, Children of the Sun groove on through both the carefree and the reflective sides of classic rock. “Her Game” is a catchy number with plenty of choir vocals and lava lamp riffs. This track is very summer like and perfect for just chilling out after blasting some Sabbath.

Some Bonham stomp anchors “Hard Workin’ Man” where the Swedish accented vocals croon all over the sweet spots and lyrically sympathize for the nine to five crowd. Turn on, tune in and drop out is definitely a central theme for this bluesy-psychedelic eight piece. The feel good vibes continue all the way to the end with “Beyond the Sun” as folkish melodies are sung between harmonica flourishes.

Soulful and promiscuous to the core, these “flower children” use their music to conjure up feelings of freedom, love, and a connection with the beautiful natural world.
-Dan Potter

Bushwhacker - A Fistful of Poison
Independent

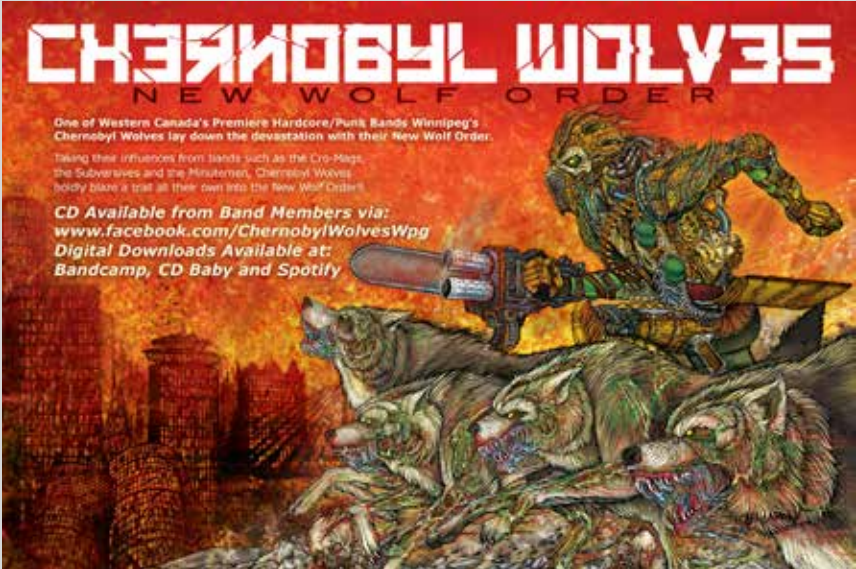


Bushwhacker releases a concept album that tells the story of addiction and betrayal involving a group of cowboy outlaws in an alternate universe. This narrative centers on the American Wild West, but also intersects with ancient Egyptian mythology.

The instrumental psychedelics on “...And They Rode West” rips up reality and transports you to a fantasy world of pure imagination. Whether you’d want to vacation to such a bizarro land is up to you, but the creativity and follow through on this album are truly stunning. Lots of audio storytelling with some funny old west voices like on “The Saloon” where drunken legends are spoken of in such a way that you’d be forgiven for thinking you may have eaten some pot brownies by mistake.

Though utilizing the exploits of a spaghetti western, this band ain’t no country infused metal shit-kickers. The post metal posturing and eerie atmosphere found on “The Weighing of the Heart” show these boys have a frightening amount going on

under those cowboy hats. Overall, this record is an indescribable effort of creativity that shouldn’t be listened to while driving.
-Dan Potter



Chernobyl Wolves - New Wolf Order
Independent Release

Following up their 2015 release, *For the Stranded*, Winnipeg thrashers Chernobyl Wolves’ latest release is not only an improvement on a great debut but gives us a glimpse into the hardcore wastelands, and I cant wait to see what is to come.

Fans of old school hardcore will want to give this a listen to. The first song’s opening riffs bring to mind some sort of airhorn or warning siren that the meltdown is coming.

Early Harley era Cro-Mags come to mind when you hear the vocals and the second song’s chorus “Sold my stuff, cannot deal” is something any punk can identify with.

The Wasteland theme of the band, from the aggressive riffs to the rumbling drums, fit perfect with their artwork and imagr. The few times I have been lucky to have seen these guys play out West was always an impressive night out.

All old school thrash and hardcore fans need to get these guys on their to do list.

- Chadsolute



Absolute Live Reviews

West Coast Rock Fest Red Room, Vancouver BC July 13, 2019

On July 13th, 2019 West Coast Rock Fest returned for its second year of rock'n roll mayhem at the Red Room Ultra Bar. Featuring artists from across Canada with a great selection of vendors, this fest had it all.

Opening the night was a band called Cache Creek based out of Vancouver. This southern-fried hard rock band pays homage to the old while giving you fresh new bluesy riffs for your ears to enjoy. They played a song called "The Man" that kicked some real ass. Just a good group of dudes playing some great tunes.

Up next was Charlie Monroe Band, a singer/ lyricist/ model from Vancouver who brings together many different styles and influences to make for an eccentric dark creepy sound. Along with some great costumes, the live performance also included some wonderful dancers making it a feast for the eyes.

Between bands, attendees could enjoy perusing of some of the finest local rock'n roll shops and vendors. There were handmade jewelry, leathers, apparel, records and they were all local. It made me happy to see how much talent there is in Vancouver all under one roof. After I did some shopping and got a drink I made my way to the stage to see the next act.

Chelsea's Tail is a local three-piece band, an all -round solid sound with good vocal harmonies and well thought out original songs. I really liked "Satellites," it's very uplifting and powerful. I'll definitely keep my eye out for the next gig these guys are playing!

Redwoods is a band that grew up playing music together in North Vancouver and it shows. These

musicians play as a unit forming a unique sound that has some classic elements and the tone of the dual guitars with that voice just blew me away. They just brought out a new album out this year called *Daybreaker*, which was produced by Tommy Mac of Hedley and "GGGarth" Richardson, who has worked with Rage Against the Machine, Melvins, and Red Hot Chili Peppers, to name a few. The album rocks, and the performance was great, so check them out!

Rebel Priest is an accomplished three-piece trash'n roll band made up of some of the baddest guitar slingers around. They have played as a supporting act for bands such as Udo, Diamond Head and Flotsam and Jetsam, to name a few. Two-time Whammy award winners, this band has been a staple in the Vancouver rock scene for the past few years with no sign of slowing down. During their set they played a few new tracks of their upcoming album *Rlyeh Heavy*, which is due for release in the fall. One of the tracks is "Electric Lady" which you can watch the video for now. On August 20th at the Rickshaw theatre, Rebel Priest will be supporting Hank Von Hell, the former frontman of Turbonegro, and it will be one you don't want to miss. In October they plan on representing Canadian rock'n roll by doing a series of dates in Japan!

The final band of the evening was Villain from Toronto. Road worn and bloodied, these dudes know how to rock hard and party even harder. In early in July, Villain played a supporting set at Slam Fest, which featured Queensryche, Skid Row, Great White, and many others. This band has experience playing with the big dogs and it shows - they held the crowds attention flawlessly with a

high energy performance and loads of face-melters. Villain has a killer self-titled EP which is the soundtrack of a Heavy Metal wasteland. I highly recommend you check it, as out you won't be disappointed.

- Malcolm Quick

Judas Priest Uriah Heep Abbotsford, BC June 17, 2019

What happens when two bands, who were at the forefront of the first two most influential movements of heavy music from the U.K., join forces to go on tour? Nearly 100 combined years of music being played night after night? Played by those who still see their work as relevant; who continue to create new music and perform it alongside the back catalogue; and for those fans who still love them for it. Any negativity driven by opposing trends; misguided notions about being too old to rock; and changes to band personnel, that could possibly be thrust in their direction, will be repeatedly blocked and thrown back at the haters, night after night.

Even though they were the opening act, I actually went into this show more excited to see Uriah Heep. This would only be their second performance in British Columbia since 2001 (the first took place in Vancouver last April) so their inclusion on this tour was really what convinced me to buy a ticket. After finally being able to see how good they were live in person, I had no doubt that their performance in Abbotsford would be every bit as good.

Before I knew it, they had come on stage and ripped through their first two songs. "For the next hour, you belong to Uriah Heep" - that was

Bernie Shaw's command to all of us.

A sixty minute set was a respectable amount of time for a band of their stature to play, and it was also becoming apparent that they were starting to win over those in the crowd who weren't very familiar with their music. It would be really hard for any classic hard rock fan to not enjoy the way they played suck classics like "Too Scared To Run," "Sunshine," "Look At Yourself," "Gypsy," "Stealin'," "Between Two Worlds," and of course "Easy Livin'." The two new tracks - "Take Away My Soul" and "Grazed By Heaven" from their twenty fifth studio album #Living The Dream - fit right in alongside the other material. To keep things from sounding too much like the studio versions, guitarist Mick Box and bassist Davey Rimmer engaged in an off the cuff musical duel. Shaw also joined in to do the same, matching Box's lead flourishes with his vocals, similar to what Ian Gillan had become well known for doing in Deep Purple. Russell Gilbrook held it all down perfectly on the drums, playing as if he had limitless energy on tap. Keyboardist Phil Lanzon was in charge of managing the multi-keyed growling beast of an organ. I love the classic sound of this instrument combined with electric guitars, and he effortlessly kept that tradition alive, making it sing with proficiency. Before they finished their set, Shaw asked if we'd like to have them come back for their fiftieth anniversary tour next year. The loud response was a resounding yes as far as I was



Photos by Chadsolite (Lehrbridge, AB)



concerned. There were two thoughts that immediately



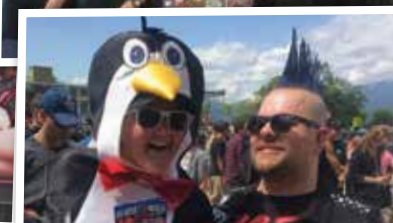
came to mind after Heep was done for the night - one hour still didn't feel like it was enough, and Judas Priest were going to have a touch act to follow.

It was almost twenty years ago that I attended my very first heavy metal concert. The headliner that night was none other than Judas Priest. It's

because of that milestone event that I find it hard to not compare all other Priest concerts to that amazing show. As the lights went down and they began their metallic musical onslaught with "Necromancer," I had to admire their confidence by starting things off with a new song from their latest album #Firepower. This show was going to stand out on its own. No comparisons to that fateful concert from 2005 would distract me from the present. All heavy metal cliches would be used in complete seriousness to describe it without a hint of embarrassment. With fifty years worth of material to fill their arsenal, they continued to employ a wisely chose array of old and new songs. "Heading Out To The Highway," "The Sentinel," and another new song, "Spectre" were next. The set design onstage and the large video screen behind them, projecting a mixture of animations, pre-recorded and live in house footage of the band, truly aided in their effort to pummel our ears and stun our eyes with the power of metal. "(Take These) Chains" and "Judas Rising" followed, maintaining a high energy level to help keep us going. As the synthesizer intro for "Out In



PHOTOS COURTESY OF COLIN SMITH



The Cold" played, the house lights went down and only one spotlight shone at a large mirror ball, scattering numerous beams of light in all directions. That was a goosebump inducing moment, and we weren't even halfway through the show yet. "Turbo," the album this song was originally released on, isn't exactly held in high regard by most fans; but this live version actually became one of the highlights of the show for me.

Rob Halford has made adjustments to how he performs over the last couple decades. It was apparent that he was choosing to speak out the lyrics instead of singing them at times, be he did still pick his spots and go for those higher notes during their performances of 70s classics like "Starbreaker." He was in fine form, leading the band with authority. The wise mixture of new and old continued with "Stealer," "Traitors Gate," and "Halls of Valhalla." Bringing in guitarist Ritchie Faulkner after the departure of K.K. Downing has, in my opinion, brought some new life and energy into the band, which has not only manifested itself on their last two albums, but their live shows as well. This night was no exception as he played everything with accuracy and made it look easy. The other new guitarist on stage was Andy Sneath, a man who is now more well known for producing albums for numerous high profile metal bands over the last several decades, including the latest Priest offering. His talents haven't remained behind the mixing board as he shredded alongside Faulkner with ease throughout the evening. He was hand picked by Glen Tipton to replace him for this tour, who had decided to step away from touring because of his ongoing battle with Parkinson's disease. Drummer Scott Travis and Bassist Ian Hill are veteran professionals who kept it all locked in and didn't miss a beat.

Another welcome surprise was when they played "Prelude," an instrumental piece originally released on #Sad Wings Of Destiny, over the PA before they came back on stage to perform "Tyrant," another 70s classic. This is definitely my favourite Priest instrumental, and now that I think about it, probably one of the few they've ever recorded. We were then treated to another fine combination of old and new songs with "No Surrender" and "All Guns Blazing." All levels of epic-ness were elevated once again with "Victim Of Changes." This song always slays live, and I was feeling the impact of this just as much as I had the last two times I watched them play it. As one of the guitarists ripped into the final extended solo, past video footage of Tipton playing the same

part was shown behind them on the big screen. Watching Halford turn around, focus his attention and point his finger towards it was actually quite a heartfelt moment amongst all the loudness. A very fitting tribute to a legendary six string master whose presence was clearly missed by his bandmates.

The final three songs they chose to end the show with came as no surprise, and absolutely no one seemed to mind. "Hell Bent For Leather," "Breaking The Law," and "Living After Midnight" gave Halford the opportunity to make sure were still with them through audience participation. I know that audiences in this part of the country aren't known for being the most engaged and energetic during concerts, but this Abbotsford crowd proved that wasn't always the case here. Before it was all said and done, Halford gave a few last words, reiterating what he had said earlier in the evening about the importance of maintaining a heavy metal community – especially "with all the shit going on right now," – by continuing to make and support the music. A very important message, and the metal gods themselves were practising what they preached. "We are Judas fucking Priest!"

-William Liira

Twiztid
G-Mo Skee
Sevedemic
Allaxulelu
The Rec Room, Calgary AB
July 11, 2019

Members of the Dark Carnival flocked to The Rec Room to see the second most famous face-painted duo perform tracks from their newest album, *Generation Nightmare*, along with some oldies that brought them to the table two decades ago. The venue doubles as a party



center, with arcade games littering the first floor while the stage is upstairs. Not quite carnival games, but it was close enough – as some Juggalos caught up on some pinball in between smoke sessions as the night went on.

The show had several openers – with local boys from Alberta humbly taking the stage before face-painted,

tried and true horrorcore superstars showed them how it was done. Allaxulelu looked like three farmboys got a hold of Leatherface's wardrobe – and with songs about axing people up, were a horrific treat. One fan traveled from BC and bought one of their masks – \$125 well spent? Sevedemic followed suit, with bloody mannequins on stage, the horror rapper further opened the abscesses as the Dark Carnival members gave enthusiastic "Whoop Whoops" after each song. G-Mo Skee changed it up a bit, with songs about pinky fucking, Nintendo games and his clothing line, "Human Cloth" – on sale now!

Twiztid, while not being part of Psychopathic Records anymore, arguably have improved since leaving. While many consider their debut, *Mostasteless*, to be their finest hour, their newest offerings, including the album of the tour, *Generation Nightmare*, have bangers. Playing for over an hour, Jamie and Monoxide certainly banged, with new songs like "Bring Me Back" and "Kill Somebody" meshing well with classics like "We Don't Die." They ended the set with hooded druids filling the stage while Blaze Ya Dead Homie made an appearance to perform a medley of Dark Lotus tracks. And then the carnival tents were taken down and it was on to the next town...

-Ryan Dyer

Necrot
Begrime Exemious
Cultist
Detherous
Dickens, Calgary AB
July 19, 2019

In the hot midsummer sun, rotting flesh stinks. And like flies to the carcass, members of Calgary's metal community descended upon Dickens to catch a whiff and rub their antennae together.

First up were Calgarian bands Cultist and Detherous. I had no previous experience with either band but was impressed with their barrage of heavy riffs and appetizing gutters. They were exactly the support a band like Necrot needed, though one fan must have walked into the wrong venue and was

doing windmill kicks during the sets. Onlookers scoffed and booed at the fellow but he was in his own personal karate land.

Direct support came from Edmonton's Begrime Exemious, who are, despite not looking it, veterans of the Albertan black metal scene. Just coming off a rooftop show with Calgary's Wake, the band was loosened

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Suburbia 8:00PM
1983. When household tensions and a sense of worthlessness overcome Evan, he finds escape when he clings with the orphans of a throw-away society.



The Big Lebowski 8:00PM
1998. Jeff "The Dude" Lebowski, mistaken for a millionaire of the same name, seeks restitution for his ruined rug and enlists his bowling buddies to help get it.



Green Room 8:00PM
2015. A punk rock band is forced to fight for survival after witnessing a murder at a neo-Nazi skinhead bar.



No Country for Old Men 8:00PM
2007. Violence and mayhem ensue after a hunter stumbles upon a drug deal gone wrong and more than two million dollars in cash near the Rio Grande.



The Warriors 8:00PM
1979. In the "near future," a charismatic leader summons the street gangs of New York City in a bid to take it over.



April & the Extraordinary World 8:00PM
2015. It's 1941 but France is trapped in the nineteenth century, governed by steam and Napoleon V. April goes in search of her missing scientist parents.



Cocoon 7:00PM
1985. When a group of trespassing seniors swim in a pool containing alien cocoons, they find themselves energized with youthful vigor.



Blood Simple 8:00PM
1984. A rich but jealous man hires a private investigator to kill his cheating wife and her new man. But, when blood is involved, nothing is simple.



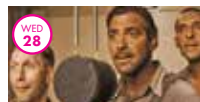
Repo Man 8:00PM
1984. Young punk Otto becomes a repo man after helping to steal a car, and stumbles into a world of wackiness as a result.



The Case of Hana & Alice 8:00PM SAT & 1:00PM SUN
2019. Tetsuko moves with her mother to a new town. After being given the seat of a murdered student in her new school, she begins investigating the death.



Brittany Runs a Marathon 7:00PM
2019. A woman living in New York takes control of her life – one block at a time.



O Brother, Where Art Thou 8:00PM
2000. In the deep south during the 1930s, three escaped convicts search for hidden treasure while a relentless lawman pursues them.



Return of the Living Dead 8:00PM
1985. When two bumbling employees at a medical supply warehouse accidentally release a deadly gas into the air, the vapors cause the dead to rise again as zombies.



Paris is Burning 8:00PM
1990. A chronicle of New York's drag scene in the 1980s, focusing on balls, voguing and the ambitions and dreams of those who gave the era its warmth and vitality.



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up and stage weary enough to put on what seemed like a headlining set. If you're looking for high quality blackened death metal, or however you wish to label them, check out Begrime on their Canadian/US tour this September.

Oakland, California's three meat-hook death ensemble entitled Necrot brought riffs sharper than a buffalo's horn and jams more infectious and dance-inducing than pow-pow percussion. Their *Blood Offerings* LP cover depicts a skeletal monk brandishing a baby over a book with a knife in his hand. With the red lights flooding the stage as Necrot jammed through the album, it was as the audience and band were basking in a crimson pool of something unmentionable. There were no fancy frills or showboating – Necrot, like death metal legends before them, stayed true and serious to the form, making their name resonate with the Calgary audience.

-Ryan Dyer

Grendel (Terminus Festival Pre-Party)
Dickens, Calgary AB
July 25, 2019

To kick off the eighth annual Terminus Festival, a pre-party show was added which served as the semi-official fourth day of the weekend-long event. Headlining the show was UK's Grendel, known for their early 2000s dancefloor moshers "Soilbleed," with marine corp shouting and marching synchronized with ultra heavy beats.

The Terminus loyal were already there in droves – a sea of black – be it in T-shirt, latex or rubber pants form. People from across the world have been coming to the festival now for years, which has been labeled "industrial summer camp" by some clever design artists looking to sell shirts. It's a good opportunity to mingle with newcomers, old friends and even some of the artists playing the festival.

As it was the first night, the energy level was high for the bands who



performed. Peter Turns Pirate was up first – a DJ who provided lots of Ministry samples into his work to get the crowd revved up with something familiar. For many, this set was a chance to say "Hello" to people they hadn't seen since last year. Esoterik took the stage next, who reminded me of Crystal Castles lite, or cherry flavored. The male/female duo put the crowd into a dreamy trance.

That trance was broken with Striplicker, a fairly aggressive band similar to 3Teeth. Heavy, droning guitars and lyrics about society, false gods and dystopian paradises had the crowd stomping and semi-moshing.

Glass Apple Bonzai was more pop-centric with comedic elements thrown in. They had Hello Moth, who would be playing later on in the festival, join them onstage for a duet.

The headliner of this first day, Grendel, who are no strangers to Terminus, had the dancefloor on fire with a rocking set not unlike ones seen by KMFDM or Combichrist. The band conjured tracks like "Harsh Generation" and the aforementioned "Soilbleed," making the attendees take part in moshpit marches.

The first night of Terminus was a success on all accounts and it just got better from there, with mindblowing sets from the likes of Health, Haujobb, Waste, Covenant, Caustic and several dozen others. Here's to a few more years of Terminus!

-Ryan Dyer

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BLAST FROM THE PAST



Blue Öyster Cult

Interview by Billy Hopeless

My first encounter with Blue Öyster Cult was in early elementary school when a young friend of mine wore a shirt with the band's cryptic sickle on it. When I asked what it meant, he told me the band's name. This was the 70s, and we kids were all warned about the evils of cults and how they'd abduct children, so I became an instant fan, letting their musical teachings play throughout my life. Now, many years later, I'm pleased to have had the chance to speak to cult leader and singer Mr. Eric Bloom, who is en route to North Vancouver to preach the words of his Career of Evil.

Absolute Underground: First off, let me ask you a question that boggles my mind. Why have Blue Öyster Cult not been inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame? The band's longevity, extensive library, which includes many timeless and incredible pieces of original

art, should be an instant gate pass, in my opinion.

Eric Bloom: Obviously we have no say, nor do our fans, though I know a few petitions have been started over the years. I understand it's all in the hands of Jann Wenner. This subject, whether or not a certain band should be in the Hall, has been argued in Facebook for years. I'd say most that are in certainly deserve the honour. A few are not rockers at all, yet make it anyway, also hotly debated in public forums. Should we be in? Based on our sales, longevity, influence on other bands, I'd say yes. But so should Kansas, Styx, REO, Foghat, Slayer, Iron Maiden, Judas Priest, Pantera and more.

AU: When I think of your band, I not only think of the music, but the amazing art work that graced your album covers. Did the band have the concepts for the album covers, or was it always left to the artist to interpret the album title into their own vision?

EB: With so many album artworks, each has a story. We rarely left it up to the label to come

up with something, though they did have to approve and did the actual art renditions.

Bill Gawlik was the artist on the first two albums and was a Stony Brook University student at the same time as our original manager, Sandy Pearlman. We knew him, as well. Sandy thought we should use him, so he got the go-ahead to come up with something for the first album. In my humble opinion, it's a masterpiece, looking back to 1972. He included in the artwork the iconic cross and hook that became our trademarked logo. He got it from a book of ancient alchemical symbols depicting lead, also used in some astrological texts for Saturn. In a semi-sleepless state, listening to the first album over and over while working the second album artwork, he told Sandy, "This music is tyranny and mutation." Thus, the second album title.

AU: Since we're talking about vinyl and cover art, I feel that with digital music you really lose the greatness of cover art, as well as other things. What are your feelings towards digital music?

EB: I agree about lack of artwork today, and liner notes, as well. But you can't look back. I mean I can, 'cause I'm a geezer. But the technology is here and can't be rolled back. That's why record stores have folded and most folks get their music online. You like one tune and stream or download it or watch the video online. Why buy the whole album? It's different days now. Unless you're a hardcore fan, then you buy everything to support your fave.

AU: On your first live album, entitled *On Your Feet or On Your Knees*, you list that some of the tracks included were from your Vancouver show at the Pacific Coliseum during your 1975 tour. What tracks were from that Vancouver stop, and what do you remember from that gig, who was opening, how was the crowd?

EB: I'm the worst person to ask. We've done more than 4000 shows and to remember one

night from back then is a blur. Take a look at Ralph's page. Google 'Hot Rails to Hull' page. It's a fan page with a lot of BOC gigs of the past information, including acts, set lists, dates, etc.

AU: Now to the future present, it's been 18 years since your last album was released in 2001, and I have read the graffiti on the wall that states there might be a new album in the works. Is that still happening? When can we expect a release date?

EB: There are official announcements on the BOC FB page about Frontiers Records signing us. It will include new music to be released around summer of 2020, plus some interesting Blu-Rays of live performances, TV appearances, etc, from the past, plus releases from the past like "Cult Classic," "Curse," "Heaven Forbid."

AU: There are quite a few bands that have covered your songs, including my sisters in L7 who put out a killer cover of "This Ain't the Summer of Love." Have you heard any covers of your works that you liked or hated?

EB: I've heard a few covers. Bonnie Tyler's cover of "Going Through the Motions" was good. YouTube is full of Reaper covers. One I like is two young ladies playing it on harps. "Godzilla" was just covered in the new movie. Buck likes it.

AU: Ok my last question comes from famed recording engineer/producer and all around cool dude, Jack Endino. What is a Diz Buster?

EB: I believe Richard Meltzer made up the 'diz'. And having your diz busted would hurt. That's why they are screaming. The diz is the groove in the head of the penis.

AU: I see, most likely from the European slang word "dizna," meaning spout or nozzle. So a screaming diz buster is a penis wrecker, which is bad enough, but did you really do seven of 'em?! Well let's end on that happy note, see you at Rock Ambleside Aug 16 - 18 in North Vancouver!

www.blueoystercult.com/

PHOTO SOURCE: blueoystercult.com/



were formed a bit later than us, they did their first demos a year later or so than ours.

AU: You had a very unique look as well, was that inspired by someone like Venom?

MS: Yeah, more like Motorhead. I think the most important thing was the bullet belts for us at that time. We stole that idea from Motorhead *Ace Of Spades* cover, looking like Django. We were all going for the metal, leather look, and the bullet belt. That was our thing. What Venom did was also unique but we wanted to bring it to the next level, be heavier, more extreme, faster. We wanted to shock the conservative people.

AU: You were scary-looking. Can you give us a brief history of

the band from its formation to today?

MS: We started in '83 as a band, our very first record came out in '84, and basically we had some tours here in Europe and also we came to Canada in 1985 for a festival called World War Three, it was the first extreme heavy metal festival in North America back in the day. The band took a little break with me as the singer, in '89, the band continued without me in the '90s, I came back in '99 as the singer and frontman for Destruction, and now for 20 years, I'm in the band again. The band never quit, it was without me for a few years. I did some different music in between that time. For the last 20 years we've had a stable lineup, releasing albums every two years. We were one of the few thrash metal bands at the beginning of the 2000's that was still doing thrash metal when thrash metal was not existing anymore. Everyone was playing melodic death metal at that time, black metal, and thrash was kind of dying. So I'm proud that we came back and we made it and that we're still around.

AU: Do you write most of the lyrics?

MS: I write all the lyrics, and I write all the music together with my guitar player.

AU: Tell us about the new album.

MS: The new record is a benchmark for the band because there was a major change in lineup. We used to be a four-piece in the '80s, and now we'll be a four-piece again from this year on, for the new album. It's the first album since... oh in the

Destruction

Interview with Schmier

(vocals / bass)

by Ira "Thrash Attack" Hunter

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to today and what are you most infamous for?

Marcel Schmier: I am the singer and bass player in Destruction.

AU: What was it like where you were growing up? What were your influences that led to forming Destruction?

MS: When we started, the metal scene was just born, we recorded our first demo in 1983, that's the year Metallica's *Kill Em All* came out, so at the beginning it was the New Wave of British Heavy Metal bands that we liked, we liked the more extreme songs from those bands. We grew up with a lot of punk rock, the heavy punk rock, we grew up on GBH and The Exploited and The Dead Kennedys and stuff like that. So when we started the band, we wanted to be more extreme, take it to the next level. We were young kids, 17 years old, and we wanted to break out of the routine of boredom, of country life, the band was our exit. We created Destruction, and it was one of the first [thrash] metal bands here in Europe.

AU: You and Kreator?

MS: Yeah Kreator came after, they didn't exist at the time. Kreator were called Tormentor, but they

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'90s somewhere, since we're a four-piece again. It's a major impact for us because when you're a three-piece you compose an album, you compose for three people, you don't compose for another guitar and double leads and guitar duels and stuff. So this is a big step for us again, to have full force on the guitars and you can hear it on the record. There's a lot of shredding going on, a lot of crazy guitar riffs, it's a really graphic album, I think.

AU: So it's called *Born To Perish*, is there a theme to it, or any standout tracks you want to talk about?

MS: The title song definitely stands for the album, lyrically wise and also the song itself, the punchiness and catchiness of the song. The lyrics are dealing with humanity obeying certain cults, a political cult, a politician or religious belief, or a spirit like the Backstreet Boys. We love to create cults... I think it's very important to be an individual and not follow the masses, not follow the trends. We wrote this album about social criticism, we write reality, we write death, and we write how to survive on this planet. That's what the lyrics deal with.

AU: Do you think that Destruction's sound has changed at all since the first album?

MS: Yeah I think of course, when you grow older, there are certain things that you achieve, certain machinery of working together, which is very helpful when you want to be successful. Every band member has his own opinion, you need to find a way to write stuff. I think at the beginning you cannot recreate the fire that the band had when you were just started in the first years, when you're 17 and you want to burn down the world. It's a different feeling than now, I'm still crazy, I still love this music, but I'm working in a different way now, there's more experience I've gained over the years. It doesn't make me less angry about things, that's why I can still write music. You have to be pissed off at the world, and we're still pissed off. We still have fun.

AU: What is *Thrash Anthems*?

MS: *Thrash Anthems* is a Best Of album that we did, the first time in 2009 and the second edition last year, it's basically a Best Of album where we

recorded the songs, because over the years we've had some bonus tracks on the albums that were re-recorded classics. Some of the 80s albums didn't sound that good so we wanted to give them a new sound, and a lot of fans liked the idea of giving the songs a new energy, a new face, and that's how the idea came about that we do a Best Of album with all re-recorded tracks... it's more punchy, it's more heavy, and of course the skills of the band as musicians has grown over the last 20 - 30 years, so I think for people who don't know Destruction, *Thrash Anthems* is a very good start to get into the band, because it features the best songs in the band's history, especially the '80s songs.

AU: Will you be touring Canada to promote the new album?

MS: Yes, we will come to North America in the spring next year. We're talking with several agents and hopefully we can confirm the tour in the next weeks. Canada has a great metal scene and as I said before, we had our very first show in North America in Canada, so we will always have a very special connection with Canada.

AU: Is there something about you that people don't know about? Secret hobby?

MS: I like sports, here in Europe, we like soccer or football a lot. I used to play football and do some martial arts when I was young. I still enjoy it but nowadays I try to keep myself fit with biking and gym workouts. I have hobbies like everyone else, but I'm not home so often, so I enjoy seeing my friends when I'm home. The band is a full time job.

AU: Final words for Canadian metal fans?

MS: We'd like to come back to Canada, it's a big country... I know that there are some cities we've never played before and hopefully one day, it would be a dream for us just to do a Canadian tour because a lot of places are far out and still have a lot of metalheads that want to see Destruction. We also have a Canadian drummer, he's originally from the Winnipeg area, he lives in Berlin these days, Mr. Randy Black, legend of course. So, it will happen one day, I promise.

Destruction.de

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slowly dipping my toes into fantasy modeling, too. I believe it's a smooth kind of evolution and I'd like to experiment more!

AU: What is it that attracted you to the Goth style?

EA: I was firstly introduced to it through



Ellone Andreea

Interview by Don McCaskill

Ellone Andreea is a Romanian model that takes her inspiration from fantasy costumes and feels comfortable in all black and sleek looks.

Absolute Underground: When did you start modeling?

Ellone Andreea: Not too long ago, actually! I like to think that the starting point was somewhere in November of 2018, when I did my first proper photoshoot, with the help of my boyfriend,



who was my photographer. Before that, I used to write a lot on my blog about style.

AU: Did you always model in the Goth style or did you do other modeling before that?

EA: I started off by modeling gothic clothing, but now I am

Japanese Visual Kei, which is what I was listening to back in my teens. The first band I actually listened to was Diary of Dreams and I fell in love and started researching the music. I later discovered Skinny Puppy and was into industrial for a while, and somehow it evolved from music to adopting the fashion and meeting other goths. So, in short, it was the music and my lifelong obsession with vampires.

AU: How did you develop your style?

EA: I believe it was something that developed over time. I take inspiration from fantasy costumes, but I am also a person that likes to feel comfortable, so all black, sleek looks are what I feel best in.

AU: What do you do when you're not modeling?

EA: Well, I work a full time job in a corporation, I craft a lot of the fantasy costumes that I wear, and of course, I retouch my pictures and film my YouTube videos. I'm a pretty busy girl!

AU: What do you do on your YouTube channel?

EA: A couple of different things. I create the usual YouTube specific videos, like reviews, makeup tutorials and vlogs, but my favorite type of videos to make are conceptual artistic videos and behind the scenes ones from my photoshootings. It's always nice to use videography to translate emotions that do not pierce through with pictures!

AU: Do you work with any brands?

EA: I do. I was blessed with the confidence of many brands such as Punk Rave Australia, Vampfangs and E&L by Lundqvist and many more, big and small. I would mention them all if I could, because apart from the wonderful people that follow me, brands being willing to work with me, is what keeps me going and lets me know I'm on the right path. They provide the tools I need in order to create, and that's wonderful!

AU: What photographers do you work with?

EA: Since I have not been modeling for a long time, the only photographer I ever worked with is my boyfriend, Andrei. It's a wonderful collaboration! I'd love to work with other photographers too, but there are not many who specialize in "alternative" photography here in Romania. Who knows, maybe I've not met them



yet.

AU: I understand you edit your pictures. How did that come about?

EA: It's a long story, as most of them are. I firstly dabbled into photo editing when I was a teenager and would post my pictures on MySpace. Looking back, the results were quite frightening to behold, but it laid the foundation for what I can

do today. In later years, I started learning more about photo editing through online tutorials and experimenting. Now, I can say I have developed my own personal style of retouching and I love working on my pictures, trying to bring to life the vision I had inside my head. I am curious though to know how others would edit my pictures, because that has never happened yet.

@ellone_andreea

PHOTO CREDIT: Andrei Beldiman

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